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Michie

General McClellan

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GREAT COMMANDERS

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GENERAL McCLELLAN

BY

GENERAL PETER S. MICHIE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS

NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
1901

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September, 1901.

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PREFACE.

THE accomplished author of this volume completed the work, with the exception of the preface and index, in December last. In the following February the reading of the proof was interrupted by an illness, terminating in his untimely death on the 16th of that month, so that the labor of proof reading devolved upon his friend and assistant professor, Captain Cornélis De W. Willcox, of the Artillery Corps. Dr. Otto Plate, librarian of the Academy, prepared the elaborate index, and, under the supervision of Professor Michie, the maps were made by First Lieutenant William Ruthven Smith, of the Artillery Corps, an instructor in the Department of Philosophy.

Peter Smith Michie was born March 24, 1839, at Brechin, Forfarshire, Scotland, and was appointed to the United States Military Academy from Ohio, graduating second in the class of 1863. He at once sought active service in the field, receiving the commission of first lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers, and before the close of the civil war he was chief engineer of the Army of the James. For his services as an engineer during the civil war he received three brevets, and for meritorious services in the Virginia campaign, terminating at Appomattox Court House, he was brevetted a brigadier general of volunteers. In April, 1867, he was ordered to the West Point Academy as Assistant Professor of Civil and Military Engineering, and four years later was appointed Professor of Natural and Experimental Philosophy, performing his duties as such for almost thirty years.

It may be questioned if any instructor at the Academy was ever more beloved and respected than General Michie, or if any member of the educational staff

ever exercised equal influence in aiding and guiding the affairs of the Military Academy. His latest thoughts were on the successful continuation of his duties there, and his dying wish as to his successor was happily gratified. Few men had more friends than the warm-hearted Michie. He desired to live, but was ready to go, although he had not nearly rounded out the allotted threescore years and ten, and had much literary work in view that he wished to complete after his approaching retirement from the Academy.

Not yet sixty-two when he was called away, but how full and complete was Michie's career! There was no break in his record of service during thirty and eight years, from the time he hastened to the field to defend his country's flag and then returned to devote his life to the best interests of his loved *alma mater*. "He was a scholar, and a ripe and good one," in all that related to his profession; and not having been connected with the Army of the Potomac during the period when it was commanded by General McClellan, it was believed that no better person than Professor Michie could be found to write an unprejudiced biography. He was by nature both honest and independent, and it would seem that he was eminently successful in preparing this volume with what Edmund Burke describes as "the cold neutrality of an impartial judge." This opinion was shared by McClellan's able corps commander, General Fitz-John Porter, who, in a letter to the writer, dated from his dying bed, May 5, 1901, says: "So far as I have been able to judge, I think it is the best work on the subject that has been written." Another accomplished army officer who also saw the proof sheets, writes: "In my humble opinion, this Life of McClellan is altogether the best piece of work done by the author, and, more than this, it is absolutely so impartial and just as to possess almost the quality of finality, so far as McClellan's qualities as a commander are concerned."

JAS. GRANT WILSON.

NEW YORK, *June, 1901*.

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GENERAL McCLELLAN.

CHAPTER I.

ANCESTRY.—WEST POINT.—MEXICAN WAR.

GEORGE BRINTON MCCLELLAN, the subject of this memoir, was born December 3, 1826, in Philadelphia, Pa. He was the third child and second son of the eminent physician, George McClellan, and of Elizabeth Brinton, his wife. His mother, a daughter of John Brinton, whose family had its origin in the south of England, was a woman of gentle refinement and unselfish disposition. Owing to her husband's peculiarly active professional life the training of the children fell almost entirely upon her, and for this loving task she was admirably adapted. Gentle in her ministrations, clear in judgment and wise in discretion, she filled home with happiness, and guided the youthful lives of her children by that wonderful intuition of a loving mother which is beyond expression or analysis. To such noble women, the loving and self-sacrificing mothers, the country owes an infinite debt of gratitude, and to them, therefore, is our first homage due.

In tracing back the lines of the father's ancestry we are brought to the beginning of the thirteenth century. The Maclellans were anciently sheriffs of Galloway and barons of Bombie, one of whom accompanied Sir William Wallace into France after the latter was defeated at Falkirk in 1298. In the turbulent times of James II of Scotland, Sir Patrick Maclellan was carried off by William, the eighth earl of Douglas, to

Thrieve Castle, where, upon his refusing to join the confederacy against his king, he was treacherously put to death by Douglas; whereupon the Maclellans, making reprisal upon the lands of Douglas in Galloway without warrant or authority, the barony and office of sheriff became forfeited to the Crown. Tradition assigns the recovery of the barony to the following circumstance: In the reign of James II of Scotland, a troop of gypsies, coming from Ireland, so infested the county of Galloway that a royal proclamation was issued, offering the barony of Bombie to any person who should bring the captain, dead or alive, before the king—an exploit which was accomplished by a son of the Laird of Bombie, who carried the marauder's head upon the point of his sword to his Majesty; from whence, to perpetuate the exploit, he assumed that figure for his crest, with the motto "Think on."* According to another tradition, the famous cannon named Mons Meg, now at Edinburgh Castle, was presented by the Maclellans to James II, to aid him in battering down Thrieve Castle in 1455, and it was probably on account of this legend that the family used as a crest a mortar piece with the motto "Superba frango."

Sir Robert Maclellan, of Bombie, gentleman of the bedchamber to the first two British sovereigns of the house of Stuart, was created a peer of Scotland with the title of Lord Kirkcudbright, granted to him and his heirs male bearing the name and arms of Maclellan, on the occasion of the coronation of Charles I at Edinburgh, May 25, 1633. The title became extinct April 19, 1832, on the death of the ninth baron, Camden-Grey Maclellan.†

From this county of Kirkcudbright, which lies on the northern border of the Frith of Solway in Scotland, three brothers McClellan emigrated to America early in the eighteenth century and became the progenitors of the family in this country. The eldest of

* Burke's Heraldic Dictionary, p. 353.
† Dictionary of National Biography, vol. xxxv, p. 210.

these settled near Worcester, Mass., and here his eldest son, Samuel, was born, January 4, 1730. In keeping with the circumstances of the time and place the young lad was brought up as a farmer, a life which in those early days led to independence of thought as well as of action. Born with a martial spirit and a patriot's heart, and invigorated by the pure air of freedom, he found ample opportunity to cultivate the one and engage the other in the service of his country before he had reached middle age. He served with great credit as a lieutenant in the French and Indian war, and later, in 1773, he became captain of a troop of horse which he had raised in and about Woodstock, Conn., where he had made his home.

When the news of the battle of Lexington reached him he immediately set out with his troop, and was fortunate enough to participate in the battle of Bunker Hill. The anxiety of his wife was relieved when she heard of his safety from the perils of battle, and in her gratitude for this favor of Divine Providence she planted three elms at Woodstock in commemoration thereof, and these now noble and venerable trees have been for more than a century loving testimonials of her devotion to her patriotic husband. Although he was complimented by Washington with an invitation to join the Continental army, with the promise of a colonel's commission, he modestly preferred service with the Connecticut militia during the war. Ample testimonials of his sturdy patriotism and soldierly ability are to be found in the commissions which the worthy Governor, John Trumbull, was pleased to bestow upon him. These are: Major, Eleventh Connecticut, October 15, 1775; lieutenant colonel, Fourth Battalion, December 2, 1776; lieutenant colonel, Eleventh Connecticut, December 7, 1776; colonel, battalion of Connecticut militia, September 25, 1777; colonel, January 29, 1779; brigadier general, Fifth Brigade Connecticut militia, June 10, 1779. After a continuous service during the war he returned to his home at Woodstock upon the declaration of peace, hung up his sword, and

quietly resumed the peaceful avocations that had been so long interrupted. He represented his friends and neighbors in the State Assembly for several terms, and finally, after a well-spent life, left as a legacy to his descendants an unsullied name worthy of emulation. He died at Woodstock, October 17, 1807.*

In the direct line of descent from the Revolutionary soldier comes James, his eldest son, followed by the two sons of the latter, George and Samuel, both of whom were born at Woodstock—the elder, George, December 23, 1796, and the younger, Samuel, September 21, 1800. Both became physicians, and each had two sons who served in the war of the rebellion. It is, however, a curious circumstance that the sons of Samuel served on opposite sides. Carswell, the elder, after graduating at Williams College, became a civil engineer, and afterward served with gallantry and distinction in the Army of the Potomac. He was severely wounded at the battle of Malvern Hill, and afterward was a most efficient staff officer of General Humphreys in the Second Corps. He is also the author of the Personal Memoirs and Military History of Grant *vs.* the Record of the Army of the Potomac. The younger son of Samuel, Henry Brainerd, also a graduate of Williams College, served on the Confederate side as adjutant of the Third Virginia Cavalry, then as assistant adjutant general of the cavalry corps of the Army of Northern Virginia, and as chief of staff to Generals J. E. B. Stuart and Wade Hampton. He has also ventured into the field of military literature, as the author of the Life and Campaigns of Major-General J. E. B. Stuart.

George McClellan, the distinguished physician and surgeon of Philadelphia, was educated at Yale College, and while there as a student, under the influence of the elder Silliman, he developed a taste for natural science which ultimately directed his studies toward the medical profession. After graduating from college in 1816 he began the study of medicine at New Haven under

* Appletons' Cyclopædia of American Biography, vol. iv, p. 84.

Dr. Thomas Hubbard, but received his degree from the medical department of the University of Pennsylvania in 1819. But even before he had obtained his degree he was elected resident physician of the hospital of the Philadelphia almshouse. During his first year of practice he performed the most important operations in surgery, such as lithotomy, extraction of the lens for cataract, and extirpation of the lower jaw. He opened a dissecting room, and here his private courses of lectures were so successful as to necessitate a larger room for the accommodation of his constantly increasing classes. Encouraged by this gratifying approval of his methods of instruction, he conceived the idea of founding a medical college, and in 1825 he, with others, obtained from the Legislature of Pennsylvania a charter for the Jefferson Medical College. He began his lectures in the new college as professor of surgery in 1826, and notwithstanding the professional opposition which developed and the difficulty of obtaining a suitable faculty, the college grew so rapidly that within ten years the students numbered three hundred and fifty. In 1838 the faculty was reorganized, but without Dr. McClellan's name, and this led to the incorporation of the medical department of the University of Pennsylvania, mainly through his own personal efforts. He began his lectures in the new institution in November, 1839, and continued them until the spring of 1843. He is credited with being the originator of the extended system of medical education as it now exists in this country and of the clinical instruction in such institutions. His professional practice increased with his growing reputation, patients coming even from the West Indies and South America to avail themselves of his skill and attainments. He was especially distinguished in ophthalmic surgery, although he had undertaken with success almost every capital operation then known to the profession. By his marvelous skill in the removal of the parotid gland he did more than any other surgeon of his time to establish it as a safe and feasible operation. He shares with

Valentine Mott, of New York, and John C. Warren, of Boston, the credit of introducing many procedures in surgery which were before new to the profession in this country. In his earlier years he contributed many original papers to medical periodicals, and was one of the conductors of the American Medical Review and Journal. He also edited Eberles's Theory and Practice of Physic (Philadelphia, 1840), and left in manuscript The Principles and Practice of Surgery, which was afterward edited by his son, Dr. J. H. B. McClellan, and published in 1848. Like all other successful instructors, he was animated by a controlling devotion to his profession and gifted with an enthusiastic love for instruction, which aroused the intensest interest in the minds of his pupils. He died in Philadelphia, May 9, 1847, after a life which, though brief when measured by years, was full to overflowing in remarkable professional achievements and good deeds done to his fellow-men.

Two other sons were born, who grew to manhood and justified by their honorable lives and distinguished careers the expectations of their honored parents. The elder, John Hill Brinton, was born in Philadelphia, August 13, 1823, and died in Edinburgh, Scotland, July 20, 1874. After graduating from the University of Pennsylvania in 1841 he adopted the profession of medicine, in which he attained great distinction both in surgery and medical practice, for he inherited much of his father's skill and quickness of touch. It is said that he possessed a wonderful intuition in the diagnosis of disease, and his gentleness of manner made him a welcome visitor in the chamber of sickness. During the war he contributed his best efforts and skill in the hospitals established by the Government in Philadelphia, and performed some notable operations which have been found worthy of record in the Medical and Surgical History of the War, published by the United States Government. He edited and published in 1848 the manuscript on The Principles and Practice of Surgery which his father left in 1847. The

younger brother, Arthur, served as aid-de-camp on the staff of his brother George, during the Peninsular and Maryland campaigns, and ended his military service when the general was relieved from the command of the Army of the Potomac, November 7, 1862.

Overburdened by the many exactions connected with the life of a successful practitioner of medicine, and engrossed with the care and anxieties pertaining to the establishment of the new medical college, Dr. McClellan could only give a limited attention to the education of his children. Fortunately his wife was particularly well fitted to supply this deficiency. Under her loving guidance George spent a happy childhood and grew to be a healthy and robust lad. Before he had reached his teens he was sent for his preliminary instruction to a school in Philadelphia, kept by Sears Cook Walker, a Harvard graduate, where he remained for four years; then to Dr. Samuel Crawford's preparatory school of the University of Pennsylvania, receiving at the same time some private instruction in Latin and Greek from an excellent German teacher named Scheffer, with whom he read Virgil and Homer. In 1840 he entered the university, but continued there only two years, because he then received an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point. Up to this time he had not exhibited any unusual talents, although he had attained high class rank; he was neither brilliant nor precocious, but was rated rather as a good student making steady progress. His habits of mind tended rather to thoroughness of detail than to fertility of imagination.

When this young lad reported himself at West Point it was found that he was below the required age for admission, he being then only fifteen years and seven months old. Owing doubtless to his good health, fine physique, and thorough mental preparation the regulation as to age was suspended in his case, and he was admitted to the Academy in the summer of 1842. It is an instructive sight to look upon the earnest countenances of these youths, coming together

for the first time from all sections of the country to enter upon a military career, and who for the time being may be taken to be the truest type of the young manhood of our country. The dress, appearance, stature, manners, and dialect of its various sections are fairly well represented in such a gathering, but after they have passed through their setting-up drill and are put into their uniforms, the barriers due to differences of previous condition are soon broken down, and those human qualities that make for association and friendship prove stronger than the accidents of birth or the influences of wealth or station. The strongest associations are at first those of classmates, but in later years these include members of other classes, for the deprivations, hardships, and sacrifices of the military service naturally cement these friendly associations into the love and affection of a great brotherhood.

Because of the dominating influence that the West Point training had on McClellan's public career it may be well to refer briefly to some of its salient features. Foreign military visitors have frequently expressed great surprise that it has been possible to maintain in the military school of a democratic people a regimen so exacting and a discipline so rigid as is found at West Point. An attentive study of its early history, and of the circumstances attending its complete reorganization in 1817, will remove this difficulty, and will show, in addition, that the application of sound principles of education, the establishment of wise regulations for discipline, and the inculcation of a patriotic ambition are sufficient reasons for its continued prosperity.

Major Sylvanus Thayer, the great superintendent, to whom the country is mainly indebted for the vitality with which his personality revivified the Military Academy, was himself a graduate of the class of 1808, and an officer of the corps of engineers. Called to assume command of the institution in 1817, after a brief investigation of the military schools of Europe, he was enabled by the firm support of the Secretaries of War

of two administrations to carry into effect his well-devised plans for the reformation and reorganization of the institution. Enjoying the full confidence of the War Department for the sixteen years of his administration, he was enabled to select from among the graduates of the Academy such officers for its future administration as were imbued with a sturdy faith in the efficacy of his ideals, and were capable of improving the studies and discipline that had already produced such gratifying results. As examples of his remarkable perspicacity, it is only necessary to name Davies, Mahan, Courtenay, Bartlett, Church, and Bailey, who became famous professors, distinguished for their sound learning, eminent ability, and great teaching capacity, and whose labors have bridged the intervening period from Thayer's time to the present with undoubted success. And of still greater importance to the country was the beneficent influence of these ideals upon the tone and discipline of the army by the influx into its commissioned ranks of the five hundred and seventy young officers who as pupils had been trained under his guidance.

"To the discharge of his important functions," says one of his former pupils, "he brought eminent personal qualifications, uniting decision with courtesy, authority with kindness, knowledge with consideration for ignorance, strict discipline with paternal admonition, unfaltering integrity to unflinching firmness, fidelity to his trust, and loyalty to his country, and with a restless energy and an untiring industry that never left anything unfinished or to chance." *

This magnificent encomium has been amply justified by the records of the graduates of West Point. But it would be a grave mistake to imagine that training alone can supply deficiencies of inherent possession or that institutions can create genius. Schools are established not for the few rare geniuses that flash upon the world, but for the many possessing talent, who through

* Cullum's Biographical Register, vol. iii, p. 655.

the helping hand of training and education come finally to be intrusted with the business of the world, so that it may be conducted conservatively and civilization progress by an orderly evolution.

The Military Academy experienced a rather precarious existence for the first fifteen years of its life, but at the time of young McClellan's admission it had had the benefit of twenty-five years' able management of the corps of engineers upon the lines laid down by Major Thayer. As a result, it had attained a well-deserved reputation among the educational institutions of the country, and its high standards in the physical, intellectual, and moral essentials of education had been rigidly maintained. But hidden as it was in the highlands of the Hudson, out of the usual lines of travel, it was scarcely known to the general public. No great war had arisen to test the efficiency of its methods and demonstrate its value to the nation. Many public men, with pardonable optimism, foreseeing no possibility of future war and thoroughly engrossed in developing the wonderful commercial facilities of the country, were lukewarm in its support. Indeed, on one occasion, just before the Mexican War, the change of a single vote in the House of Representatives would have defeated the bill for its support. Nevertheless Congress continued to appropriate annually the modest sum required for its maintenance, and its graduates were sent to the distant frontier, where the little regular army was engaged in a continuous struggle with the hostile Indians. There was another equally important service to the country that the graduates of West Point were able to render. When, in 1827, the railroad mania began, there were only a few short and insignificant local roads, aggregating in length less than twenty miles, and there were but few educated civil engineers in the country capable of conducting larger works. Under these circumstances the Government adopted the wise policy of loaning officers of the army, scientifically educated at the Academy, to assist railroad companies in carrying out more ambitious projects.

In this way West Point graduates became the pioneers in railroad construction, and the educators of an able body of civil engineers, who to this day have continued the inherited traditions, methods, discipline, *esprit de corps*, and high bearing of their distinguished predecessors. It is within the limits of probability that the great success of such able engineers as McNeil, Whistler, Tyler, Barney, Swift, and many others who followed their example in engaging in civil engineering, may have influenced many young men to seek the advantages of the West Point education, and who would not otherwise have been attracted there by visions of military glory. The profession of arms is not, in time of peace, especially engaging, and it would be an interesting circumstance to ascertain whether young McClellan's steps were guided to West Point by his inherent military instincts, derived from his revolutionary ancestor, or by the desire of his parents to secure for him a good scientific education.

In the summer of 1842 his class began their student life at West Point, and although he was but a young lad at the time, he cheerfully complied with all the exactions of his new environment, for he was inherently a lover of order and of discipline. He had acquired at school habits of application and a remarkable facility in the use of language for one so young, so that it was not long before he was transferred to the upper part of his class, and in honest rivalry was able to maintain his position during the whole of his academic career. At the dreaded examination in January, when the new class comes before the academic board for their first arrangement in scholarship, McClellan came out second in a class of one hundred and one members, being first in mathematics and eighth in French. At the end of his first year he was third in the class, which was then reduced to eighty-three members; the second year he held his own, then dropped one file the third year, but recovering during the last year, he came out second in general standing on final graduation, the class then numbering but sixty, and having lost in its

four years of struggle forty-eight of its original members. The first honors of the class fell by just right to a brilliant scholar, Charles Seaforth Stewart, who had held his position against all competitors during the whole four years of his cadet life. In this honorable rivalry for scholastic distinction nothing occurred to mar the mutual regard of Stewart and McClellan or to disturb their friendship. In recalling the memories of their cadet days Stewart says of McClellan: "He was a noble, generous-hearted, clear-headed enthusiastic, able fellow. There was not a mean thought in him. He was well educated, and, when he chose to be, brilliant. In every point, so far as I can recall, he was true and honorable, and our personal relations were always very pleasant as cadets." In after years, so strange are the fortunes of war, Stewart served as major of engineers during the Peninsular campaign in the army commanded by his classmate, McClellan.

Among McClellan's comrades there were many who afterward gained considerable distinction in their profession. In the senior, or first class, were Grant, Franklin, Ingalls, and Augur; in the second, Pleasonton, Buckner, Sackett, and Hancock; in the third, W. F. (Baldy) Smith, Fitz-John Porter, Stone, Wood, Clitz, D. A. Russell, and Granger; and in his own class were Foster, Reno, Couch, Seymour, Sturgis, Stoneman, Palmer, Gibbs, Gordon, Davis, Pickett, and T. J. (Stonewall) Jackson. In the succeeding classes, with the members of which he had more or less intimate association during his cadet life, were A. P. Hill, Burnside, Gibbon, Ayres, Griffin, Heth, Trowbridge, Duane, Tidball, Buford, Gillmore, Parke, and Holabird. Little did these young cadets then imagine that they would be called upon in the near future to lead great hosts into battle, and, through the valor of their soldiers, become famous generals in the war of the rebellion.

Too much importance can hardly be attached to the regular habits of life which are enforced upon these young and growing lads by the proper division of the twenty-four hours of the day for study, recitation, drill,

recreation, and sleep. McClellan came to the Academy an immature boy, and left it a vigorous, sturdy young man, of medium stature, with broad shoulders and deep chest; he had, however, such a well-proportioned figure that it concealed rather than displayed his great muscular strength and physical activity. With an active brain, a clear mind, a pure heart, and a body well trained in all athletic exercises, it could well be said of him that he possessed *mens sana in corpore sano*. Upon his graduation he was recommended by the academic board to the War Department for promotion into any corps or arm of the service.

The cadets at West Point, coming as they do from every congressional district in the country, reflect with very great fidelity the various shades of political opinion that for the time being are there prevalent. It is true, however, that their views undergo modification to some extent through the influences of association and education, but, nevertheless, West Point represents in miniature the whole country more accurately than does any other institution of learning in the land. And so when the election of President Polk, in 1844, foreshadowed the war with Mexico, the divided sentiment of the country was accurately portrayed among these youthful representatives. As the prospects for war became more certain, the members of McClellan's class, then on the eve of graduation, gave themselves up to the more thorough study of tactics, strategy, and the art of war, for, independently of whatever opinion they entertained as to the justice of the war, they knew that they would soon be called upon for immediate service. And when the news of the successes of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, gained by General Taylor's little army of regulars on the 8th and 9th of May, 1846, reached West Point, every youngster of the graduating class was anxious for orders that would carry him to the seat of war.

McClellan, having been commissioned a brevet second lieutenant of engineers upon graduation, was immediately assigned to the company of sappers and

miners, which had been authorized by the act of May 15, 1846, and was then being organized at West Point by Captain A. J. Swift, of the corps of engineers, assisted by Lieutenant G. W. Smith of the same corps. This company was the first of its kind in the army, and the men and officers, with the exception of the captain, who had studied its requirements in Europe, were ignorant of the details of its duties. And as the company was under orders to proceed to the seat of war at the earliest practicable moment, the officers studied at night and drilled their men by day in the preparation of siege material and the laying out of batteries and lines of field fortification. McClellan soon mastered the details and won the respect of his soldiers by the ability with which he developed their manual skill and dexterity in the construction of gabions, fascines, and other revetments. Early in September the company sailed from New York, and on October 11th it landed at Brazos Santiago with a strength of seventy-two officers and men.

From this place it was sent to Camargo for a short time, and thence to Matamoras; attached then to General Patterson's command, it was assigned to Twigg's division of regulars, and in January, 1847, marched with it in advance to Tampico, two hundred miles distant, repairing roads, making bridges, and doing other pioneer work while on the march. After a month's delay at Tampico it was re-embarked, and with the first troops of Scott's army landed, March 9th, to engage in the siege of Vera Cruz.

The duties of an engineer officer in active service, which McClellan was now called upon to perform, are extra hazardous and of an importance entirely beyond the rank which he holds. Required by the functions of his office to get as near the enemy's line as possible, often without regard to personal safety, he must reconnoiter the enemy's front, coolly judge of the strength of his defenses, and obtain reliable information that will govern the commanding general in his plan of battle. To be properly equipped for such delicate and responsible duties, he must possess clear perception,

analytical judgment, and personal bravery free from rashness.

Colonel Totten, the able chief of engineers, devised the plan of the siege of Vera Cruz, and the location of the batteries of attack and lines of investment; and the information upon which this was based was derived from the reconnoissances and study of the relations of the ground made by the engineer officers, only ten in number, then with the army. McClellan, though the youngest in age and, excepting Foster, the junior in rank, displayed such devotion, ability, and zeal in the hazardous duty devolving upon him as to demonstrate his fitness for membership in this *corps d'élite* of the American army. The marvelous success of the siege, resulting in the capitulation of Vera Cruz and the Castle of San Juan d'Ulloa, March 29, 1847, brought deservedly great credit to the engineers and artillery, the science of the one being ably supplemented by the skill of the other.

In the series of brilliant actions which characterized the subsequent campaign McClellan bore an honorable part. As a subaltern officer of the company of sappers and miners, he shared with them all the dangers to which it was exposed by reason of the advanced position which its duties assigned to it, and, in addition, he was frequently called upon to engage in the hazardous duty of personal reconnoissance. In order to escape the poisonous hot winds of the *tierra caliente,* now daily impending, it became a matter of supreme importance to the commanding general to hasten the advance of the army into the interior as soon as possible after the terms of capitulation had been effected. But owing to the deficiency of transportation, it was not until April 17th that the rear division of the army reached Plan del Rio, about sixty miles from Vera Cruz. It was at the Cerro Gordo, a few miles beyond, that the Mexican General Santa Anna had collected his forces to dispute the farther advance of Scott's army. After a careful study of the position, based upon some daring reconnoissances of the engineers, General Scott

determined to turn the Mexican left, which rested on the hill Telegrafo, and was strongly defended by infantry and artillery behind artificial defenses. At the same time General Pillow was directed to make a tentative front attack against the Mexican right to distract their attention from the movements on their left. This position of the Mexican right was practically unassailable, defended as it was by twenty-three guns in position, with strong infantry supports. McClellan, having been detached with ten of his men from the engineer company, was directed by General Pillow to clear out the obstructions and open up the roads for the advance of his brigade. Under the severe artillery and musketry fire of the enemy, the tangled undergrowth and felled timber formed an impassable abatis, and prevented a successful assault, but in the meanwhile the Telegrafo on the right was gallantly carried and the enemy's line of retreat secured. As a result, the enemy in Pillow's front was obliged to surrender to the brigade they had successfully repulsed but a short time before. In this affair both Tower and McClellan were complimented in Pillow's official report for the great zeal and activity they displayed in the execution of their duty. Besides being an active participant, McClellan was also an interested student in the operations of the campaign, and Scott's brilliant tactical maneuver by which he gained the pass of Cerro Gordo made such a deep impression on him, that in after years, in the West Virginia campaign, he attempted it at Rich Mountain with gratifying success.

The capture of Cerro Gordo insured the advance of the American army into the highlands of the interior and escape from the sickly climate of the coast. The march was resumed on the morning of the 19th, Worth's division leading, and after making camp that night at Encero, it reached Jalapa early the next day. So disastrous had been the defeat of the Mexicans and so prompt the advance of our army, that several difficult positions which might have been strongly held by the enemy under other circumstances, were left unde-

fended and were passed in safety. The town and castle of Perote were occupied April 22d, without resistance, where many guns and other munitions, abandoned by the enemy, fell into our hands. As the army advanced toward Puebla its progress was delayed only by its limited transportation, which was entirely insufficient to supply its needs over the long line from its principal depot at Vera Cruz. The enemy, however, offered no serious resistance to its progress. On May 14th, while our troops were in bivouac near Amozoc preparing to make an imposing entrance into Puebla the next day, the Mexicans attempted a surprise, but without success. In this affair McClellan distinguished himself by his coolness and daring in the capture of a Mexican cavalry officer, whom he brought in a prisoner after a lively chase.

Puebla was occupied May 15th, and here a long delay was obligatory to await the arrival of the necessary re-enforcements for the prosecution of the campaign, since the little army was depleted by the discharge of seven regiments of twelve months' volunteers, May 4th, at Jalapa, their terms of enlistment having nearly expired. The Government had been inexcusably dilatory in providing re-enforcements for Scott's army, which, having fought its way into the interior of the enemy's country, had suffered such losses by battle, sickness, and expiration of service that its position might well have been considered hazardous in the extreme. The act providing for ten one-year regiments for the regular army was passed in February, but it was not until August 6th that the re-enforcements under General Pierce arrived at Puebla. In this precarious interval the strength of the American army at Puebla fit for duty, before the arrival of Pillow's troops, was only fifty-eight hundred and twenty; and with his added, the aggregate fit for duty was a little over eight thousand men. Pierce's brigade increased this to a little over ten thousand men for the advance to the Mexican capital. The story of the subsequent campaign seems almost incredible. Against an enemy three

times its number, fighting in defense of its own capital, which was admirably defended by nature and art, a single defeat might have proved most disastrous. But Scott's army was well officered and disciplined, and his engineers were men of distinguished ability, whose keen perception and wise counsel were continually made of avail in the plans which the matured judgment of the commanding general devised.

Three days after the army moved from Puebla it crossed the summit of the Rio Frio Mountains, and from thence it could see the City of Mexico and the surrounding country. It was soon concentrated at Ayotla, a small village on the north shore of Lake Chalco, where it was halted until the engineers could reconnoiter the most practicable route for the advance. The most direct route lay between Lakes Chalco and Texcoco, which was, however, strongly defended by the batteries erected on the hill El Peñon. Another reconnoissance on the 13th, in which McClellan took part, and which was characterized by General Scott as the boldest of the war, was pushed as far as Mexicalcingo, which demonstrated the great difficulty of this route and caused the adoption of that to the south of Chalco, so as to approach the City of Mexico by way of San Augustin. With the engineer company at its head, Worth's division led the way, followed by the rest of the army. And now began that series of battles which gave such renown to our gallant little army in Mexico, and brought it to the gates of the Mexican capital: Contreras, August 19th, San Antonio, Churubusco, and San Pablo, on the 20th, were such conspicuous feats of gallantry against an enemy three times their number, in their own well-chosen and fortified positions, that the Mexicans were thoroughly demoralized, and the city could then have been captured had not an armistice intervened. Though but a very junior subaltern officer of the army, McClellan's bravery, gallantry, and good conduct were so conspicuous as to merit and receive special commendation. At Contreras he had two horses shot under him, and

while temporarily in command of a section of artillery he was struck by a grapeshot, which, however, luckily expended its force upon the hilt of his sword. Upon being relieved by Jackson, of Magruder's battery, from the command of the section, he did effectual service with a battery of mountain howitzers, whose officer had also been wounded. He was with his company of engineers when it led Smith's brigade of regulars in its attack on the flank of the enemy, and afterward routed their cavalry in a charge on the flank of this brigade. "Lieutenant G. B. McClellan," says General Twiggs, "after Lieutenant Callender was wounded, took charge of and managed the howitzer battery with judgment and success, until it became so disabled as to require shelter. For Lieutenant McClellan's efficiency and gallantry in this affair I present his name for the favorable consideration of the general in chief." And he says further: "To Lieutenant G. W. Smith, of the engineers, who commanded the company of sappers and miners, I am under many obligations for his services on this and many other occasions. Whenever his legitimate duties with the pick and spade were performed, he always solicited permission to join the advance of the storming party with his muskets, in which position his gallantry, and that of his officers and men, were conspicuously displayed at Contreras as well as Cerro Gordo."

Similar commendation occurs in General Persifor F. Smith's report, who says: "Lieutenant G. W. Smith, in command of the engineer company, and Lieutenant McClellan, his subaltern, distinguished themselves throughout the whole of the three actions. Nothing seemed to them too bold to be undertaken or too difficult to be executed; and their services as engineers were as valuable as those they rendered in battle at the head of their gallant men."

Summarizing the results accomplished by his army in these conflicts, General Scott says: "It has in a single day, in many battles, often defeated thirty-two thousand men, made about three thousand prisoners,

including eight generals, two of ex-Presidents, and two hundred and five other officers; killed and wounded four thousand of all ranks, besides entire corps dispersed and dissolved; captured thirty-seven pieces of ordnance, more than trebling our siege train and field batteries, with a large number of small arms, and a full supply of ammunition of every kind. These great results have overwhelmed the enemy."

As no satisfactory conclusion could be reached by the commissioners in their conference for a definite peace, General Scott gave notice of his determination to end the armistice on the 7th of September, and hostilities were accordingly renewed the next day. In the afternoon of the 7th orders were issued for the closer concentration of the army, and the engineer officers were pushed forward in reconnoissance of the defensive position of the enemy. This consisted of the castle of Chapultepec, crowning a hill one hundred and fifty feet in height, strongly garrisoned and armed with artillery; in front was the battle line of the Mexicans, their right resting upon a regular square bastioned fort, inside of which was a large building called the Casa Mata, used for storing powder, and their left five hundred yards east upon the Molino del Rey, a great pile of stone buildings, which with its inclosures was capable of strong resistance to attack. This line was ably defended by a force greatly in excess of the Americans, and was well contested upon its flanks, but after two hours of bloody struggle a complete victory was secured by our troops. This success left Chapultepec as the only obstacle yet remaining to be overcome in front of the city. Whether to assault it in turn or to direct attention to the causeways to the east of it, was now to be determined by careful reconnoissance and study. It was finally decided to assault it, and make the approach to the city by the Belen and San Cosme gates after its capture. On the night of the 11th positions for the batteries were selected, and the construction of Battery No. 2 was confided to McClellan; it was located a short distance to the northwest of the village of Tacu-

baya, and had for its armament one twenty-four-pounder gun and one eight-inch howitzer. Exposed as it was to the fire of the batteries of the enemy during its construction, it afforded him some gratification to know that it contributed greatly, by its own well-directed fire, to the successful assault that followed.

The success attending the assaults of these strong outer defenses of the city was very dearly bought at the price of the lives of many gallant officers and men, but the circumstances were such at this critical period that delay meant irretrievable disaster. After the capture of Chapultepec the troops were pushed rapidly against the Belen and San Cosme *garitas,* the engineer company to which McClellan was attached taking the lead of Worth's division on the line of approach to the latter. In front of the *garita* the enemy's artillery swept the causeway, while his infantry, covered by the houses that lined both sides, was enabled to pour a destructive fire upon the attacking forces. Lieutenants Smith and McClellan, the two remaining officers of engineers with the company (Stevens having just been wounded), led their men on opposite sides of the road to a position where they could command the battery and thus open the way for the infantry. This they did by breaking through the party walls of the adobe houses, driving out the Mexican infantry, and by this cover reached the desired position. In this hazardous service McClellan displayed great coolness and the highest courage, and as he led his men in person through scenes of the greatest danger he gained their utmost affection and admiration. It was a fitting close to the events which had preceded from the day they landed at Vera Cruz until they now entered as conquerors in the capital of Mexico. This little company of engineer troops formed but a small fragment of Scott's army, but it had performed with the highest courage all the dangerous work intrusted to it, not only of its own peculiar service, but on the fighting line as well, and it had good reason to be proud of itself and its officers. General Scott took possession of the City of Mexico September

14, 1847, his effective forces being then only sixty-five hundred men, and this act, with the exception of a few minor skirmishes, closed the war. He could well afford to say with regard to one of the causes of this phenomenal success: "I give it as my fixed opinion that, but for our graduated cadets, the war between the United States and Mexico might, and probably would, have lasted some four or five years, with, in its first half, more defeats than victories falling to our share; whereas, in less than two campaigns, we conquered a great country and a peace without the loss of a single battle or skirmish."

The army of occupation entered upon a well-earned period of recuperation pending the negotiations for a definite treaty of peace, and, with the exception of a few minor skirmishes, active employment of the troops in war ceased. In his year of active service McClellan had gained much practical information, and, after his baptism of fire, had endured the dangers and fatigues of the campaign with cool bravery and alert activity. In common with others, he had suffered some loss of bodily vigor, which was destined to make its existence known in decreased vitality in the winter of 1861. Universal commendation was bestowed upon the engineer officers not only by the commanding general, but by all the subordinate commanders, for their unremitting zeal, bravery, dash, and skill, by means of which the defensive positions of the enemy were thoroughly reconnoitered, and plans for attack wisely conceived and successfully executed. McClellan, though the youngest of these, was unremittingly employed and assigned to duties that would ordinarily have fallen to an officer of higher rank; he thus benefited by the fact that there were so few officers of his corps with the army. He was too subordinate in position to have the solution of the greater problems of the campaign to solve, but he possessed that cast of mind which retained the elements of each in his memory and subjected them to a contemplative study to ascertain whether they had been properly solved. The official commendation of his

superior officers brought him in due time the only recognition which his Government was in the habit of bestowing for brave conduct on the field of battle, that of brevets. These were: First lieutenant, August 20th, "for gallant and meritorious conduct in the battles of Contreras and Churubusco"; and captain, September 13th, for Chapultepec. He was also brevetted for Molino del Rey, which he declined on the ground that he had not participated in that battle.

The garrison duty of the engineer company in the City of Mexico ended May 28, 1848, and on that day McClellan marched with his company to Vera Cruz to embark for home. They reached West Point, their proper station, June 22d, and here the young graduate of less than two years' service was welcomed back to his alma mater as a veteran of the war, a dignity well sustained by his soldierly bearing and bronzed complexion, notwithstanding the fact that he had barely reached the age of young manhood.

CHAPTER II.

EXPLORATION.—CRIMEAN WAR.

For the next few years McClellan had a pleasant station and the agreeable duty of assisting in the instruction of cadets in practical military engineering, being able to demonstrate the importance of his instruction by illustrations drawn from his recent experience in Mexico. He became a member of the Napoleon Club, which the officers on duty at West Point had organized for the critical study of the campaigns of that master of the art of war. Their meetings were held in a large room in the Academic Building, upon the walls of which were painted accurate maps of the theater of wars in Spain, Italy, and Germany, drawn to a sufficiently large scale to illustrate the strategical movements of Napoleon's principal campaigns. Prof. D. H. Mahan, the head of the department of civil and military engineering at the Academy, presided at these meetings and gave the members the benefit of his keen, incisive criticism and instructive analysis in their studies of the Napoleonic wars, the fruit of which was afterward made manifest in the war of the rebellion. McClellan selected the campaign of 1812 for his essay, and in accordance with his habit of mind devoted every spare moment to its study to the exclusion of everything else; and when the paper was read he had demonstrated to his comrades that the bent of his mind was strategical rather than tactical. He received many compliments on the clearness of his style, the purity of his diction, and the mastery of his subject. During this period, in addition to his professional study, he acquired a substantial knowledge of foreign languages

and improved his acquaintance with the best literature. He had also much to occupy him in the dry details of plans and estimates for public buildings, particularly that of the new engineer barracks, for which he made many finished drawings, fulfilling all the exact requirements of the engineering department of that day.

Having succeeded to the command of the engineer company, June 18, 1850, McClellan gave a great deal of attention to the physical development of his soldiers and expertness in handling their arms. This led him to translate the excellent work of Gomard on Bayonet Exercise, and instruct his noncommissioned officers, who in turn taught the men how to handle the musket as a weapon of defense against the lance, saber, or musket. It proved to be an excellent gymnastic exercise, a graceful accomplishment, and gave the men much additional confidence in themselves and their weapons. His adaptation of the French system of Gomard to the tactics of the United States Army was published in 1852, after it was made, by regulation of the War Department, upon the recommendation of General Scott, a part of the system of instruction for the army.

McClellan was relieved from duty at West Point, June 21, 1851, and ordered to report to Brevet-Major John Saunders, Corps of Engineers, as his assistant in the construction of Fort Delaware. The masonry forts, which were the main elements in the scheme of the permanent seacoast defense of that time, were considered of sufficiently great importance to require the personal supervision of the chief of engineers at Washington in almost all the details of their construction. Consequently but little latitude was permitted to the senior engineer officer on the site, and he was obliged to follow instructions with the minutest care; and still less would the individuality of the junior officers be permitted to have any sway. So that it must have been a welcome relief to McClellan when, after a few months' duty upon this work, he received orders, March 5,

1852, to join Marcy's expedition for the exploration of the sources of the Red River of Arkansas.

Captain Randolph B. Marcy, of the Fifth Infantry, had been engaged for three years in exploring the then unknown country lying upon the Canadian branch of the Arkansas, the head waters of the Trinity, the Brazos, and the Colorado of Texas, but at this time a great portion of the Upper Red River country was entirely unknown. Many previous attempts had been made, but without success, the first of record being by officers sent out by the French Government, but who went no higher than Natchitoches, La. Sparks's expedition in May, 1806, passed above the Great Raft, but was then turned back by a large Spanish force, and compelled to abandon its further prosecution. In the same year Pike's expedition went up the Arkansas intending to strike across the country to the Red River, but, after many privations and much suffering, it was captured by the Governor of New Mexico on the Rio Grande, and was sent home by way of Chihuahua and San Antonio. Again Colonel Long, of the Topographical Engineers, attempted this exploration in 1819–'20, but failed to find the sources of the Red River, striking the Canadian instead; and so, to complete the topographical knowledge of this portion of our territory, Marcy's expedition was organized and started from Fort Belknap on the Brazos, May 1, 1852. The *personnel* comprised Captain Marcy, Lieutenant Updegraff, Surgeon Shumard, and fifty-five men of Company D, Fifth United States Infantry, with Captain McClellan as engineer officer, but who also performed the duties of commissary and quartermaster to the command. The official report of this exploration was published by Congress, but an interesting narrative is embodied in Marcy's Army Life on the Border, where all the incidents of their daily marches and discoveries are related. Suffice it to say that the expedition started on its march into the unknown territory from the mouth of Cache Creek on the Red River on May 9th, and reached its goal on the 16th of June, meeting with no great difficulties ex-

cept perhaps that of being deprived of palatable water while crossing the great gypsum belt. Turning south, June 20th, the expedition followed the border of the Staked Plains till it reached the valley of a beautiful stream, which Marcy named McClellan Creek, "in compliment to my friend Captain McClellan, who I believe to be the first white man that ever set eyes upon it." The principal branch of the Red River was reached on the 27th, over a route which led through an almost continuous prairie-dog town, and on the next day the expedition arrived at Fort Arbuckle, from whence the escort was returned to Fort Belknap. During their absence rumors had been received that the greater part of the *personnel* had been massacred by hostile Indians, and McClellan had the pleasure of reading his obituary upon his return to civilization.

Upon being relieved from duty with Captain Marcy, McClellan was ordered to report to General Persifor F. Smith as chief engineer on his staff, but this pleasant detail lasted only for a short time, during which he accompanied the general while the latter was making a military inspection of his command. This enabled him to visit Galveston, Indianola, St. Joseph, Corpus Christi, Fort Merrill, San Antonio, and Camp Johnston on the Concho River. Arriving at the latter place, October 24th, he found orders relieving him from duty on General Smith's staff and assigning him to the charge of the surveys for the improvement of the harbors on the coast of Texas from Indianola to the Rio Grande.

To this new duty he applied himself with his usual unremitting assiduity, and with such success that his report, submitted April 18th, to the Chief of Engineers, General Totten, and afterward published in the Executive Documents of the first session of the Thirty-third Congress, shows that he had then completed the surveys of the bars along the coast from Paso Cavallo to the mouth of the Rio Grande, the harbors of Brazos Santiago, Corpus Christi, Aranzas, and the inland channel from Matagorda Bay to Aranzas Bay, and, in addi-

tion, had submitted plans and estimates for their improvement. A series of low sand islands separate the waters of the gulf from the bays and lagoons that lie between them and the main shore. Crescent-shaped bars, convex outward, which are subject to great and irregular changes with every storm, lessen the depth of water that can be carried over them and thus materially affect the commercial interests of this part of the country. McClellan had to solve the problem of an economical expenditure of public money that would result in increased commercial facilities arising from such modifications in the bars and channels as would result in improvements of a permanent character. After a careful study of all the facts that he could gather and the personal observations that he was able to make, he formulated a theory of the causes that produce these obstructions and their irregular changes, from which he deduced conclusions that governed his recommendations. This report furnishes an excellent example of the analytical character of his mind as well as an illustration of his indefatigable industry. But before he could subject the truth of his theory of harbor improvement on the coast of Texas to the test of actual trial, he was informed of his assignment by the War Department to a new sphere of duty.

Congress having passed an act providing for such explorations and surveys as the War Department might deem advisable to ascertain the most practicable and economical route for a railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, the Secretary of War assigned its general direction to Isaac I. Stevens, Governor of the Territory of Washington, and formerly an officer of the Corps of Engineers, directing at the same time that Brevet-Captain McClellan be placed in charge of the western portion of this route. This required him thoroughly to explore the Cascade Range from the Columbia River to the forty-ninth parallel, to make a detailed examination of the passes, and obtain full information of the range in general; and upon the completion of the survey he was to proceed eastward

as far as the Rocky Mountains to meet the main party coming from the east under the immediate direction of Governor Stevens. He was authorized to employ such guides, hunters, muleteers, and civil assistants as were necessary for the performance of the duties intrusted to him. The orders assigning him to this duty were dated Washington, D. C., May 9, 1853, and he immediately proceeded to San Francisco to organize his command for the expedition, which he finally assembled at Fort Vancouver.

McClellan arrived at Fort Vancouver, June 27th, but it was nearly a month before the organization of his party was advanced to such a stage that he felt that he could venture into an unknown country with the possibility of coming into conflict with hostile Indians and be prepared to rely entirely upon his own resources. The expedition, in its first composition, was somewhat unwieldy and its progress consequently slow; it comprised three army officers, including himself, a surgeon, a geologist, an assistant engineer, an interpreter, six other assistants, four noncommissioned officers, and twenty-four enlisted men; these, with twenty-two packers and three hunters and herders, made an aggregate of sixty-six persons, while his animals numbered one hundred and seventy-eight. Taking a general northeasterly direction, he crossed the dividing ridge south of Mount Adams to the eastern slope of the Cascade Range, and reached Chequos, ninety-four miles from Vancouver, August 8th, where he halted two days to give his animals some grass, which they had been without for two days. Camp Wenass, eighty-five miles beyond, was reached August 20th, where a depot was established until an examination of the Nachess Pass could be made.

So far his progress had been exceedingly slow, having made on the average only about six miles a day. He excuses this by attributing the many vexatious detentions to the miserable quality of the animals and pack saddles which he had been forced to take, and to the difficult nature of the country through which he

had passed. Fearing to undertake a farther progress north with less than a three months' supply of provisions, he sent Lieutenant Hodges with the pack horses to Steilacoom, through the Nachess Pass, with directions to exchange them for mules and bring back the requisite supplies to prosecute the exploration. While awaiting Hodges's return McClellan made a personal examination of this pass, and sent other members of his party to the north and east to collect such information as would expedite the objects of the expedition. But upon his return to camp he received an express from Hodges conveying the information that no spare mules could be obtained from Steilacoom, and that most of his horses had broken down. He at once determined to reduce the size of his party by sending in his escort and packers, and to undertake the remainder of the exploration with a strength of but thirty-six men, including himself. This being accomplished, he established his next camp at Ketetas on the Yakima River, September 3d, and the next morning started for the Snoqualme Pass at the head of the Yakima Valley, which he reached the second day thereafter. Unfortunately, his examination was a very cursory one and extended only three miles across the summit, and the information with regard to the depth of winter snow, derived from Indians and what he took to be the markings on trees, was afterward found to be quite erroneous, he reporting it to be as great as from twenty to twenty-five feet, whereas it scarcely ever exceeds seven. It must be admitted that McClellan did not accomplish the object of his exploration while in this vicinity, for he did not discover the two passes which are now in use by the Northern Pacific and the Great Northern Railroads to cross the Cascade Range. Indeed, the former, known as the Stampede Pass, not more than fifteen miles south of the Snoqualme, lies about midway between it and the Nachess Pass, where McClellan reported that there certainly was no pass; while the latter, at the head of the Wenachee or Pisquoise River, was dismissed from

consideration with the remark, " It appears certain that there can be no pass at its head for a road."

Lieutenant Hodges arrived from Steilacoom, September 16th, bringing twenty-nine pack horses loaded with provisions, and the command, consisting now of thirty-six persons, forty-two riding animals, and fifty-two pack animals, with seventy days' provisions, began on the 20th the passage of the mountains between the Yakima and the Columbia. So difficult was this crossing that more than seven hours were consumed in advancing but two miles, while two mules were killed and two seriously injured in making this precipitous descent. Fort Okinakane was reached September 27th, and the conclusion was arrived at upon sufficient investigation that there was no practicable railroad route between Fort Baker and the Hudson Bay Company's trail from Okinakane to its trading post at Langley. The possibility of such a route by the valley of the Methow River was then thoroughly investigated and its impracticability satisfactorily determined. To complete the work assigned to McClellan's party there remained now only the valley of the Okinakane, and this was carefully examined as far north as latitude 49° 26′, which brought the expedition to within thirteen miles of Lake Okinakane and well within British territory.

Having now completed the reconnoissance of the Cascade Range from the Columbia River to the northern boundary of the United States, McClellan felt that the most important part of his duty had been performed, and, as winter was approaching, he determined to move eastward and seek to make junction with Governor Stevens's main party, which was then coming westward from the exploration of the Rocky Mountains. This was happily effected, October 28th, in the vicinity of Colville, and, after a conference upon the result already achieved, the two divisions, under the respective commands of Captain McClellan and Lieutenant Donelson, were directed to proceed to Columbia Barracks by way of Walla Walla and the Dalles

and there await instructions as to the discharge of their men and arrangements for office work of the survey. At this time Governor Stevens, deriving his information of what McClellan had accomplished from that officer himself, was thoroughly satisfied with what had been done, and in this frame of mind issued an order, October 29th, containing the following complimentary language: "The chief of the exploration congratulates his associates upon the junction of the eastern and western divisions on the banks of the Spokane River, and for the successful accomplishment of the great objects of their joint labors. To Captain McClellan, his officers and men, too much credit can not be ascribed for their indefatigable exertions, and the great ability of all kinds brought to their division of the work. They can point with just pride to the determination of two practicable passes in that formidable barrier from the Mississippi to the Pacific, of the Cascade Range, and to a most admirable development of the unknown geography of the region eastward to the Columbia, as showing the unsurpassed skill and devotion which has characterized the chief of the division and all of his associates."

But six days later Stevens learned at Walla Walla that the snow difficulties at Snoqualme did not exist to the extent that McClellan had reported, and finally directed Mr. Tinkham to attempt its passage, which the latter did, with two Indians, leaving Walla Walla January 7th, and reaching Seattle January 26th, only seven days after leaving the eastern divide. In the meantime Stevens had directed McClellan to complete his examination of the Snoqualme Pass from the western side to connect with his previous advance from the east. For this purpose McClellan started with a small party in a canoe from Olympia, December 23d, going first to Steilacoom, and thence by way of the Sinahomish to the Snoqualme Falls, intending to make a barometrical survey of the western approaches to the pass. But owing to the increasing depth of snow as he proceeded inland, and the final refusal of his Indian

guides to accompany him farther, he felt obliged to abandon his purpose after a short progress. This failure, contrasted with Mr. Tinkham's success and combined with Governor Stevens's lessened opinion of what McClellan had really accomplished, served to bring about a mutual coolness which did not entirely disappear until the spring of 1861. McClellan had certainly failed to solve the most important part of the problem committed to him, that of determining the existence and character of the passes of the Cascade Range suitable for railroad crossing, since he reported that at the Columbia River the only one worth considering, and did nothing to locate the two that are now used for that purpose.

McClellan's report, published in the House Executive Documents, Second Session, Thirty-third Congress, written in his usual clear and graphic language, is an interesting study not only because of the subject-matter with which it deals, but because it exhibits, in this his first independent command, those characteristic qualities of abundant preparation to the point of unwieldiness, capacity for organization, attention to detail, prudent caution, magnifying of difficulties, and lessened fulfillment, which later, as commander of the Army of the Potomac, became then so much the more prominent since his position was the more exalted.

Jefferson Davis, the Secretary of War, was very complimentary to McClellan, and after the completion of the latter's field operations directed him to visit various railroads, and to collect such well-established facts in the construction and working of existing roads as would serve as reliable data in determining the practicability of constructing and working roads over the several routes explored. The memoranda that he gathered and submitted to the War Department embodied a full description of the existing gradients of the principal railroads of the United States, formulas to determine the maximum load that could be hauled by various engines up different grades with illustrative examples, statements of the weights and cost of locomo-

tives, and other similar data; statistics relating to water and fuel for transportation purposes and their relations to the maximum load, derived from the actual experience of the most prominent existing roads. These, with a brief of the characteristics and cost of six of the important eastern railroads, together with certain statistics of the more important tunnels already constructed in various parts of the world, gave such sufficient information as was necessary at that stage of the problem for the preliminary study of the feasibility of the projected Pacific Railroad over the several routes surveyed.

The favorable impression which had already been entertained by the Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis, with regard to the abilities of Captain McClellan, and which had been manifested in selecting him to take charge of the western division of the survey for the northern route, was confirmed, in the opinion of the Secretary, by the manner in which these responsible duties were performed. And he now signalized his appreciation of the young officer by selecting him to proceed to the West Indies and investigate and report upon the harbor and peninsula of Samana, in San Domingo, with respect to its value as a naval station. McClellan reached the Bay of Samana, July 25, 1854, on board the United States flagship Columbia, Commodore Newton commanding, and, notwithstanding the oppressive temperature, proceeded with alacrity to carry out his instructions. He submitted two reports upon his return: one, dated United States ship Columbia, Pensacola Harbor, August 27th, giving a brief but sufficiently full account of the character of the harbor, a description of the peninsula, character of the country, soil, timber, roads, etc., in sufficient detail to inform the Government of the desirability of its acquisition; the other report, dated Philadelphia, September 30, 1854, was mainly confined to a description of the political and geographical character of the whole island, together with an analysis of the defenses of San Domingo, its troops, navy, and character of its people.

These reports were not made public until they were called for by the House of Representatives, January 5, 1871, when the proposed annexation of the Dominican portion of the island of San Domingo was under discussion in Congress. This magnificent harbor of Samana, thirty miles long by twelve broad, lying directly in the track of all vessels making use of the Mona passage, was clearly seen by McClellan to be of the greatest importance to the United States as the most valuable naval station in the Caribbean Sea; and it is interesting to note that the same thought in the mind of President Grant caused him to make strenuous efforts during his first administration to secure its possession to the United States, but without success.

After his return from the West Indies McClellan was busily engaged in completing his reports and labors in connection with his railroad investigations, and while in Washington came intimately in contact with the higher officials connected with the army and its administration. So that when the four additional regiments of the regular army, authorized by the Act of March 3, 1855, were organized, McClellan was offered and accepted a captain's commission in the First Cavalry, and resigned his commission as first lieutenant of engineers. In addition to this reward of substantial promotion he received still another mark of the high estimation in which he was held at the War Department, in being selected—it is said by the President himself—a member of a military commission to study the art of war in Europe.

The order constituting the Military Commission to the theater of war in Europe was issued from the War Department, April 2, 1855. The officers comprising this commission were Major Richard Delafield, Major Alfred Mordecai, and Captain George B. McClellan, all men of marked ability in their profession, and each chosen for his special fitness for the purpose in view. The Secretary of War, himself an educated soldier, outlined the objects of their mission as follows:

"You have been selected to form a commission to

visit Europe for the purpose of obtaining information with regard to the military service in general, and especially the practical working of the changes which have been introduced of late years into the military systems of the principal nations of Europe.

"Some of the subjects to which it is peculiarly desirable to direct your attention may be indicated as follows:

"The organization of armies and of the departments for furnishing supplies of all kinds to the troops, especially in field service. The manner of distributing supplies.

"The fitting up of vessels for transporting men and horses, and the arrangements for embarking and disembarking them.

"The medical and hospital arrangements, both in permanent hospitals and in the field. The kind of ambulances or other means used for transporting the sick and wounded.

"The kind of clothing and camp equipage used for service in the field.

"The kinds of arms, ammunition, and accouterments used in equipping troops for the various branches of service, and their adaptation to the purposes intended. In this respect the arms and equipments of cavalry of all kinds will claim your particular attention.

"The practical advantages and disadvantages attending the use of the various kinds of rifle arms which have been lately introduced extensively in European warfare.

"The nature and efficiency of ordnance and ammunition employed for field and siege operations, and the practical effect of the late changes partially made in the French field artillery.

"The construction of permanent fortifications, the arrangement of new systems of seacoast and land defenses, and the kinds of ordnance used in the armament of them—the Lancaster gun, and other rifle cannon, if any are used.

"The composition of trains for siege operations; the kind and quantity of ordnance; the engineering operations of a siege in all its branches, both of attack and defense.

"The composition of bridge trains, kinds of boats, wagons, etc.

"The construction of casemated forts, and the effects produced on them in attacks by land and water.

"The use of camels for transportation, and their adaptation to cold and mountainous countries.

"To accomplish the objects of your expedition most effectually in the shortest time, it appears to be advisable that you should proceed as soon as possible to the theater of war in the Crimea, for the purpose of observing the active operations in that quarter. You will then present yourselves to the commanders of the several armies and request from them such authority and facilities as they may be pleased to grant for enabling you to make the necessary observations and inquiries."

The commission sailed from Boston, April 11, 1855, and on their arrival in London were courteously received by the British authorities and officials. Everything possible was done to facilitate the object of their mission in the shape of letters and instructions to the British military and naval commanders in the Crimea. But the contrary was the case in France, for here they found that, owing to an imperative rule which prohibited any foreign military officer from afterward visiting any Russian post or army in the Crimea after having seen the French camps, they were obliged to decline this favor with such an obligation attached to it. Disappointed in their endeavor to obtain from the French Government the facilities which they had reason to hope would be readily granted, the commission left Paris, May 28th, with the determination of hastening to the Russian camp in the Crimea, going first to Berlin to confer with the Russian minister in that city, from whom they hoped to get the necessary information as to their proper procedure. While here,

they received assurances that the Prussian Government would afford them every facility to inspect the military works and establishments of the kingdom upon their return from Russia. New difficulties now began to arise, and the commission found it necessary to proceed from Warsaw to St. Petersburg, where all necessary authority rested and was alone to be obtained. But the meshes of diplomacy interposed their obstructing influence, and the very fact that they represented their Government in an official capacity prevented them from attaining their wishes. The probability of witnessing a bombardment of the works of Cronstadt by the allied fleet, and other great military events in that quarter, together with the fact that their instructions required them to make a study and examination of those important seacoast defenses, in some measure compensated for the disappointment experienced in not going directly to Sebastopol.

After some considerable delay which it was not within their power to prevent, and during which they employed themselves in a careful examination of the various military works and establishments of Russia and Prussia, the commission finally reached Constantinople on the 16th of September, and through the courtesy of the English naval authorities they obtained passage on the first steamer that left for Balaklava, where they arrived on the morning of the 8th of October. Upon their arrival at the headquarters of the British forces they found themselves among friends with every disposition to accord to them all the facilities that they could possibly desire. General Simpson, the British commander, on learning of their arrival, sent two officers of his staff to conduct them to the quarters he had caused to be assigned to them in the camp of the Fourth Division on Cathcart's Hill, a locality that overlooked a great extent of the field of operations. He provided them with rations and forage for their horses during their entire sojourn in the Crimea, and it is exceedingly pleasant to note that every official and personal facility and kindness

were extended to them by the officers of the British army.

Similar courtesies were extended to them by the officers of the Sardinian and Turkish armies, and as a consequence the commission confined its examinations to the camps, depots, parks, workshops, etc., of these armies, never entering the French camps in the Crimea except on visits of courtesy. They took their departure from Balaklava on an English transport, November 2d, and after spending some days in Constantinople and Scutari to inspect the hospitals and depots of the allies, they proceeded to Vienna to examine the Austrian military establishments. From this place they journeyed through the military states of Europe, stopping at every important fortified place the study of whose defenses would add to their knowledge and enhance the value of their mission. When they returned to France they were able to inspect some of the important military works, but were not permitted the advantage of association with educated officers at such times, the practice being of sending as an escort a non-commissioned officer. As an agreeable contrast, however, when they reached England en route for home they were again made to feel the courtesy and kindness of the military and naval officers, who were generous in their efforts to gratify the desires of the commission. They sailed for home, April 19, 1856, having been occupied nearly a year in their labors, and had gathered a vast fund of information to be submitted to the War Department in the form of official reports.

The comprehensive study that had been assigned to the commission required that a subdivision of the subjects should be apportioned to its members, and that each should submit his own report to the War Department. To McClellan was assigned the study of the organization, equipment, tactics, and functions of the cavalry and engineer troops of the several European states, and particularly to report upon the Russian army. His familiarity with foreign languages enabled

him to make use of all the foreign official military literature that was collected by the commission, and to supplement the information derived from this source with whatever knowledge of detail he could obtain from personal investigation. His reports, which were all completed shortly after his return and submitted to the War Department between October 7, 1856, and January 15, 1857, are models of clear, concise, and yet comprehensive military papers. They comprise reports upon the Austrian, Prussian, French, English, and Sardinian cavalry and infantry; the Russian, Austrian, French, and English engineer troops; and a complete report upon the composition and strength of the Russian army. From these studies he submitted a report upon the United States cavalry, in which he endeavored to show what were its immediate pressing needs, and what measures should be taken to place it upon a proper footing. To do this he also submitted, for the consideration of the War Department, a series of Regulations and Instructions for the Field Service of Cavalry in Time of War for the United States Army. These he translated from the original Russian, making such suitable modifications as would adapt them to our own organization.

When these reports were made public in 1857, being one of the Senate Executive Documents of the special session of the Thirty-fourth Congress, they were eagerly examined by the military student and were found to contain much valuable information. The engineer officer could draw from them such detailed information as would enable him to reproduce the pontoon boats and construct the military bridges in use in the various European services; to lay out intrenchments, manufacture the necessary siege material, and direct siege operations according to the latest developments of the art; and know how to equip, organize, and instruct engineer companies in which our own service was at that time so deficient. Officers of artillery, cavalry, and infantry learned from these reports the latest developments in the organization, equipment,

clothing, rations, drill, and tactics of their special arm, and the modifications which actual field experience would of necessity bring about. There was much food for thought, which naturally produced its effect on the minds of officers of our service with respect to the changes that could with propriety be introduced in our small army, hampered as it was with the indifference with which it was regarded in time of peace by those public men who were charged with its maintenance, and were at the same time blind to the possibilities of war.

The illustrations which accompany these reports are numerous, and admirably supplement the text. At a glance one can see the existing formations, the accepted orders of battle, and the modifications that had then been recently introduced, caused by improvements in the artillery and infantry arms. Many of the plates published in this volume, illustrating tactical formations and outpost dispositions, found their way into the text-books and lectures on the art of war at the Military Academy, and their professional value was thus disseminated throughout the army.

Perceiving also the necessity of some modification of our cavalry equipments, McClellan submitted a model of a new cavalry saber and saddle-tree, the latter being an adaptation of the Hungarian saddle then in use by the Prussian cavalry, which he recommended for adoption in our service. These recommendations, which he made in October 3, 1856, were referred to the Ordnance Department of the army, and, after thorough trial of the models, were approved by the War Department. The army is thus indebted to him for the comfortable McClellan saddle which from that time came into use in our service, and had the army derived no other benefit from McClellan's membership on the commission, this alone would have been a sufficient recompense.

Owing to the official difficulties which the commission met with in every country, except England, to obtain the requisite authority to proceed to the seat of

war in the Crimea, it did not finally arrive at its destination until a month after the fall of the Malakoff, and the practical close of active operations. During the three weeks of their sojourn McClellan made a study of the operations preliminary to the siege, as well as the salient points of the siege itself, and embodied them in his report for the benefit of his brother officers of the army. This report is very instructive in several particulars. In the first place, he subjects this campaign to the test of military criticism, not for the purpose of fault-finding or instituting comparisons, but for the lessons that may be learned from it. Then in this, his first strictly military paper, describing events and operations so recent, and with the advantage of personal intercourse with the participants, he displays a confidence in his analysis and conclusions that mark the military expert; and finally he draws from his study certain convictions as to our need of fortifications, which he seeks to impress upon his countrymen.

In this comprehensive paper he criticises the allies for the dilatoriness of their disembarkation at Old Fort and the slow march thence to the Alma; in the dispositions for battle on the banks of that stream, and the subsequent advance to the plateau of Sebastopol. Neither do the Russians escape his censure, for he says: "In considering this march, it is somewhat difficult to determine which party committed the greatest faults—the allies in so exposing themselves, or the Russians in failing to avail themselves of the opportunities offered. Thus far the allied generals displayed none of the qualities of great commanders; their measures were halfway measures, slow and blundering; they failed to keep constantly in view the object of the expedition, and to press rapidly and unceasingly toward it." Proceeding with his analysis from the time that the allies reach Balaklava and Kamiesch, he says, with reference to the charge of the English Light Brigade at the battle of Balaklava: "With regard to the ground over which the English light cavalry charged, that, if the eye were not raised from the soil under foot,

no more favorable place could be selected for a charge of cavalry—it was on the smooth turf of the flat and level bottom of a wide valley; but, upon turning the glance to the ground to the north and east, imagining the Russians in the positions which they occupied on the 25th of October, 1854, it is difficult to divine how any officer could direct such a charge to be made; destruction was inevitable, and nothing could be gained. No doubt there are often cases in which one arm of service may consistently be required to sacrifice itself for the benefit of others, but this was not such a case. The most appropriate criticism upon this exhibition of insane and useless valor seems to be that, no doubt, made by a well-known French general, 'C'est bien magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre!'" He compliments the steady and magnificent courage of the English at Inkermann, and the just perception of the true from the false attack of the Russians by which Bosquet saved the English from defeat on that day; and after a description of the ground upon which the battle of the Tchernaya was fought, assigns as a sufficient reason for the Russian defeat the strength of the position and the gallantry of its defenders, and not any want of courage or impetuosity on the part of the Russian troops.

In describing the topographical features of the harbor of Sebastopol and the peninsula to the south of it where the most stubborn and remarkable siege of history had just been fought, he exhibits the traits of the capable engineer; and then proceeding to the description of the most important points in the line of the Russian defense in the order of their strength, the Flag-staff Bastion, Central Bastion, Malakoff, Redan, and Little Redan, he shows how these weak, hastily constructed, and imperfect fortifications were enabled, under the skill of that remarkably gifted military engineer Todleben, and the brave Russians, to withstand for so long a time the efforts of the allies to dislodge them. And while he expresses the conviction that the siege of Sebastopol called forth the most magnificent

defense of fortifications that had ever occurred up to that time, he shows how little foundation there was for the generally received accounts of the stupendous dimensions of the works and of the new systems of fortifications brought into play. In view of the fact that McClellan was himself to be stopped in his advance on the Yorktown Peninsula a few years subsequently by a determined adversary occupying a line of earthen intrenchments, it is well to use his own language in estimating the influence of such works. Speaking of the Russian defenses of Sebastopol, he says: "The plain truth is that these defenses were simple temporary fortifications of rather greater dimensions than usual, and that not a single new principle of engineering was there developed. It is true that there were several novel minor details, such as rope mantelets, the use of iron tanks, etc.; but the whole merit consisted in the admirable adaptation of well-known principles to the peculiar locality and circumstances of the case. Neither can it be asserted that the plans of the various works were perfect. On the contrary, there is no impropriety in believing that, if Todleben were called upon to do the same work over again, he would probably introduce better flanking arrangements. These remarks are not intended to, nor can they, detract from the reputation of the Russian engineer. His labors and their results will be handed down in history as the most triumphant and enduring monument of the value of fortifications, and his name must ever be placed in the first rank of military engineers. But in our admiration of the talent and energy of the engineer, it must not be forgotten that the inert masses which he raised would have been useless without the skillful artillery and heroic infantry who defended them. Much stronger places than Sebastopol have often fallen under far less obstinate and well-combined attacks than that to which it was subjected. There can be no danger in expressing the conviction that the siege of Sebastopol called forth the most magnificent defense of fortifications that has ever yet occurred.

"This would seem to be the proper place to notice a popular fallacy which, for a time at least, gained extensive credence. It was that the siege of Sebastopol proved the superiority of temporary fortifications over those of a permanent nature. It is easy to show that it proved nothing of the kind, but that it only proved that temporary works in the hands of a brave and skillful garrison are susceptible of a longer defense than was generally supposed. They were attacked as field works never were before, and were defended as field works never had been defended."

He now turns his attention to the works of the attack, and enumerates the difficulties attending the beginning of the siege—wretched roads, limited transportation, deficiency in supplies, and lack of siege material—and with respect to this he says: "If a deficiency in men and means is to be assigned as a reason for the early operations of the allies, it is but another proof that, in undertaking the affair, they neglected one of the clearest rules of war—that is, to undertake no important operation without full and reliable information as to the obstacles to be overcome and the means of resistance in the hands of the enemy." This criticism was destined to reflect unfavorably upon his own operations in the Peninsula campaign in 1862.

In concluding his report he draws the following just conclusions applicable to our own country:

"The permanent defenses of the harbor of Sebastopol against an attack by water, although inferior in material and the details of construction to our own most recent works, proved fully equal to the purpose for which they were intended. Indeed, the occurrences on the Pacific, the Baltic, and the Black Sea all seem to establish beyond controversy the soundness of the view so long entertained by all intelligent military men, that well-constructed fortifications must always prove more than a match for the strongest fleets.

"It is believed that a calm consideration of events so hastily and imperfectly narrated in the preceding

pages must lead all unprejudiced persons among our countrymen to a firm conviction on two vital points:

"1. That our system of permanent coast defenses is a wise and proper one, which ought to be completed and armed with the least possible delay.

"2. That mere individual courage can not suffice to overcome the forces that would be brought against us were we involved in a European war, but that it must be rendered manageable by discipline, and directed by that consummate and mechanical military skill which can only be acquired by a course of education instituted for the special purpose, and by long habit.

"In the day of sailing vessels the successful siege of Sebastopol would have been impossible. It is evident that the Russians did not appreciate the advantages afforded by steamers, and were unprepared to sustain a siege.

"This same power of steam would enable European nations to disembark upon our shores even a larger force than that which finally encamped around Sebastopol. To resist such an attack, should it ever be made, our cities and harbors must be fortified, and those fortifications must be provided with guns, ammunition, and instructed artillerists. To repel the advance of such an army into the interior, it is not enough to trust to the number of brave but undisciplined men that we can bring to bear against it.

"An invading army of fifteen thousand or twenty thousand men could easily be crushed by the unremitting attack of superior numbers; but when it comes to the case of more than one hundred thousand disciplined veterans, the very multitude brought to bear against them works its own destruction, because, if without discipline and instruction, they can not be handled and are in their own way. We can not afford a Moscow campaign.

"Our regular army never can, and perhaps never ought to, be large enough to provide for all the contingencies that may arise, but it should be as large as

its ordinary avocations in the defense of the frontier will justify; the number of officers and noncommissioned officers should be unusually large to provide for a sudden increase, and the greatest possible care should be bestowed upon the instruction of the special arms of the artillery and engineer troops.

"The militia and volunteer system should be placed upon some tangible and effective basis, instructors furnished them from the regular army, and all possible means taken to spread sound military information among them.

"In the vicinity of our seacoast fortifications it would be well to provide a sufficient number of volunteer companies with the means of instruction in heavy artillery; detailing officers of the regular artillery as instructors, who should at the same time be in charge of, and responsible for, the guns and material.

"In time of war, or when war is imminent, local companies of regular artillery might easily be enlisted for short terms of service, or for the war, in seacoast towns. The same thing might advantageously be carried into effect on a small scale in time of peace."

These valuable and judicious comments, emanating from an officer scarcely thirty years of age, serve to illustrate one of his distinguishing characteristics—a fondness for strategical analysis, which is constantly in evidence throughout his military career.

In January, 1857, McClellan, having been offered the position of chief engineer of the Illinois Central Railroad, resigned his commission in the army and went to Chicago to enter upon his new duties. Early in 1858 he was elected vice president of the company, which placed him in control of its management in Illinois. He readily mastered the main features of the problem with which he was charged, and displayed sound judgment in dealing with matters that had heretofore been unfamiliar to him. His capacity for continuous labor and methodical attention to details soon enabled him to understand the possibilities of the situation and to direct the organization successfully. His

subordinates were not slow to appreciate his kind and courteous treatment, his readiness to acknowledge efficient service, and his just recognition of merit, and so here, as elsewhere, he was enriched and strengthened by their love and support. His prominent official position also brought him in close contact with many merchants, bankers, and public men, whose appreciation of his straightforward and honorable conduct in business affairs, and his genial courtesy, made his new field of duty pleasant and successful.

Notwithstanding his separation from the army, he had lost none of his love for the service, and so when he had established his home in Chicago he opened wide its portals to his army friends and welcomed them with generous hospitality. Every officer passing through Chicago was certain of an affectionate greeting, and many were the guests that enjoyed the freedom of his bachelor home. Among these were not only a number who afterward served under him during the war, but also old comrades of the Mexican War, who afterward became his antagonists in the rebellion, among whom were Beauregard, Buckner, G. W. Smith, and Joe Johnston. About this time he was able to do a kindness to his old friend Burnside—who, having met with financial reverses in the manufacture of his rifle, was greatly in need of a helping hand at the time—by securing for him the position of cashier of the land department of the Illinois Central Railroad Company, and then, with instinctive delicacy, he invited Burnside and his wife to make their home with him and share in the joint housekeeping. In the full appreciation of this timely and generous act of friendship, Mrs. Burnside presided with graceful tact and dignity, and added the charm of sweet womanhood to this hospitable home, making it so much the sweeter and richer than before.

The solidity of his acquirements and the thoroughness of his investigations soon enabled him to exhibit gratifying results that promised, and would have secured, permanent success, but he was not destined to remain long upon this duty. Several of his friends who

were financially interested in the eastern division of the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad Company urged him to accept the presidency of that company, at a salary of ten thousand dollars a year, and as the offer was an exceedingly tempting one, he concluded to do so. In September, 1860, he removed to Cincinnati and entered upon his new duties, which were, in the main, an expansion of those he had so well learned in Chicago, but now his experience enabled him to take hold with added confidence and increased authority. These four years of hard work in railroad operation, involving continuous practical study of transportation problems, methods, and possibilities by rail and river over the entire country between the Gulf and the Great Lakes, made him thoroughly familiar with the products and people of this region and of the intricacies connected with the traffic interests of the upper part of the Mississippi Valley. He became well versed in the complex and extended organizations of the great corporations he served, and increased his influence by the happy and tactful manner with which he met and dealt with the governors and other State officials, with municipal authorities, and with merchants and other business men in the conduct of his office. The fruit of all this training was rapidly ripening for the ultimate benefit of the nation.

While serving in Chicago and Cincinnati he came in touch with several men who were destined to have an important influence upon his subsequent career. By far the most prominent of these was Mr. Lincoln, who at that time was counsel for the Illinois Central Railroad Company at Springfield; but no one then suspected that a few years would develop this quaint Illinois lawyer into the great and noble President—the grandest figure of American history. Here, too, he first employed Allan Pinkerton in detective work for the company, who subsequently became chief of the secret service of the Army of the Potomac, under the cognomen of Major Allen, and whose stupendously egregious estimates of the enemy worked such mis-

chief to his employer. In Cincinnati he was often visited by Rosecrans, then in civil life, engaged in operating, not very successfully, a small oil refinery, with whom he had frequent consultations on the critical situation of the times, which undoubtedly opened the way for his return to the military service under the command of McClellan, though the latter was much his junior. Here, too, he first met Judge Thomas M. Key, who was then one of the legal advisers of the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad Company, and whom McClellan found so congenial a spirit that they soon became the warmest of friends. Both of these men were important factors in the military work afterward accomplished by McClellan in Western Virginia.

Toward the close of his services in Chicago McClellan felt that his material prospects were sufficiently encouraging to permit him, with perfect propriety, to enter upon new relations and assume new responsibilities, and accordingly on the 22d of May, 1860, he married Ellen Mary Marcy, the daughter of Captain Randolph B. Marcy, his old commander in the Red River exploring expedition. In this new relationship he was blessed far beyond the lot of most men, for his marriage was an exceedingly happy one. It proved to be a union of two minds that were counterparts of each other, and of two souls whose mutual love was continually strengthened by the powerful influences of a Christian faith. Nothing could have been more delightful than their happiness at this time, nor apparently more secure than the prospects for its continuance. He was then in the full vigor of manhood, engaged in a profession that satisfied his ambition, in the enjoyment of a comfortable salary, and with sufficient leisure to indulge his literary tastes without detriment to the full performance of his official duties. Enjoying the distinction of having completed a public career where his services had received the special approbation of his Government, his status in the social and business world was prominent. His charming and accomplished wife,

proud of the deeds of her heroic husband, and of his standing in intellect and acquirements among his fellows, poured out the treasures of her love to make her home a haven of rest and a sacred refuge from the strife of the external world. For too brief a period, however, was this ideal existence to continue, for the political horizon was becoming most threatening, and he was among the first to perceive the necessity that would soon arise, in the fast approaching irrepressible conflict, of offering to the country his services for war.

In casting a retrospective glance over the salient incidents of McClellan's career down to the completion of his service as a member of the Military Commission and the submission of his reports to the War Department, one can not help being impressed with the variety of his official service, the enhanced reputation which his success brought about, and the confidence he entertained in his own ability to master any difficulty. At this time he was but thirty years old, and yet had enjoyed some notable service in the Mexican War, served with success as an instructor and company commander at West Point, been engaged for a time in the construction of permanent seacoast defenses and in the surveys of harbors, then in charge of an important exploration where he was practically in immediate command, afterward sent on an important secret expedition to the West Indies, and finally chosen a member of an important Military Commission to study the art of war in Europe. What are the predominant characteristics which he displays in these widely different fields of his official duty? They are simply the developed elements of character that distinguished him while he was a student at West Point. A well-balanced mind, that held decision in abeyance till judgment was ripe; deliberate and exacting in preparation before committing himself to irrevocable execution; an indefatigable student and worker, he mastered the minutest details, and as he was no believer in chance he was neither rash nor aggressive. No young officer stood higher in the estimation of his official su-

periors, nor in general reputation throughout the army, than did this *beau ideal* of the American officer, for he possessed the qualities of mind and heart that called forth the respect and affection of all who came in contact with him. Certainly the opportunities which were granted him to observe and reflect upon the discipline and organization of the armies of the foremost nations of Europe seem most fortunate in view of the responsibilities that were afterward placed upon him by the Government after the disaster of Bull Run in July, 1861.

CHAPTER III.

PRELIMINARY TO THE REBELLION.

Ever since the human mind threw off the fetters of authority and began to investigate independently it has perceived that this world of ours is governed by law, and not by chance; and since that epoch many of the most complex phenomena of the physical world have been shown to be merely the results of those extremely simple laws of energy which control the changes that take place in matter. A grander generalization has followed this enfranchisement of the human mind in the belief that the history of nations is nothing more than the logical result of the action of immutable moral laws established from the beginning of time for the government of humanity. History no longer concerns itself exclusively with the mere record of events, but rather with the changes that gradually affect the spirit and sentiment of the body politic, for these are the sources from which incidents flow and events have their origin.

What, then, we may inquire, were the poisonous germs which the organic law of our country nurtured in its bosom, and which in process of time, under the fostering protection of constitutional law, attained so vigorous a vitality as to threaten the life of the nation? In the midsummer of 1860 it seemed almost impossible to believe that such a happy, prosperous, and contented people, so rich in every material blessing, and in the full enjoyment of civil and religious liberty, could possibly be divided into two hostile geographical sections, and that those who were bound together by the strongest ties of fraternal and national affection could be

arrayed against each other in deadly conflict. But now, after the conflict is over, the historical student, free from the emotional influences of the time, clearly discerns that great moral laws were operating in the evolution of the nation, and that its emancipation illustrates the great truth that every false principle carries within its bosom the seeds of its own destruction.

Von Holst, in his masterly analysis of the constitutional history of the United States, shows that the great rebellion was the logical conclusion of a struggle between two essentially opposing principles, State *versus* National sovereignty, and slave *versus* free labor, both of which ultimately joined forces in an attempt to overthrow constitutional government. This distinguished writer shows that the thirteen colonies up to the Revolutionary War were so divergent in their political institutions, religious views, and social relations during the whole course of their previous development, that it is easier to find more points of difference than of similarity between them, and that their combination to resist the usurpations of the mother country was forced upon them by reason of their geographical situation. Notwithstanding these divergences of the colonies, the absolute necessity of united action brought into existence the General Congress, which met at Philadelphia, September 4, 1774, and which from that time became a revolutionary body, since it virtually exercised sovereign power in defiance to the authority of Great Britain. And as the delegates to this Congress were nominated by the "good people of these colonies," to the extent that this Congress assumed power to itself and made bold to adopt measures national in their nature, to that extent the colonists declared themselves prepared henceforth to constitute *one* people, inasmuch as the measures taken by Congress could be translated from words to deeds only with the consent of the people. The transformation of the colonies into States was accomplished in the name of the whole people through the revolutionary Congress, and was not therefore the result of their

separate and independent action. The Declaration of Independence and its successful maintenance by force of arms brought one nation, and not thirteen, into the family of nations. But it was not long before the divergent characteristics of the people of the several States began to work confusion in their relations to each other and to the General Government.

The troubles with France toward the close of the century gave rise to the alien and sedition laws, and these were more or less directly responsible for the "Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions," in which the principles of State sovereignty and nullification were distinctly affirmed. Madison was the author of the Virginia resolutions, and Jefferson had written the original draft of the Kentucky resolutions, the latter, in substance, being: "Resolved, That the several States who formed that instrument [the Constitution], being sovereign and independent, have the unquestioned right to judge of the infraction; and that a nullification by these sovereignties, of all unauthorized acts done under color of that instrument, is the rightful remedy." The false principles embodied in these resolutions were now first distinctly formulated, and ever after served as potent weapons to threaten the destruction of the Union whenever their partisans believed the time ripe for their execution. Secession was but the corollary to nullification, and the fact that the thought of carrying it into effect was entertained by some of the States, both North and South, during the early history of the country is abundant evidence of the fallacious views that some of the prominent political leaders then held as to the nature of the national union.

The political struggles that had their foundation in the question of slavery began almost immediately after the adoption of the Constitution. The first paragraph of Section 9, Article I, of the Constitution embodied the compromise which offered the hope that the two sections of the country might dwell together in harmony. But it was not in the nature of things that such was to be the case. Petitions for the ameliora-

tion of the slave trade by the Quakers, and for the abolition of slavery signed by Benjamin Franklin as president of an abolition society, gave rise early in 1790 to acrimonious debates on the question of committing them to a committee of the House of Representatives. This was the beginning of the seventy years' struggle during which these antagonistic principles were advocated by opposing sides, and which were destined to be settled only by bloody war. Sectionalism, due to diverse interests in the economic situation, really began in 1792, but the active agent that furnished the fuel for the unquenchable fire was slavery. The slave oligarchy was always aggressive and never suffered defeat. Every victory gave its partisans a more favorable vantage ground for still more exacting demands as the price to be paid for the continuance of national unity. Its adherents saw that unless the balance of power was maintained, in the Senate at least, and the principle of its territorial extension was recognized by the law of the land, slavery was doomed; hence came the Missouri Compromise, the annexation of Texas, the Mexican War, the struggle for Kansas, and the demand for territorial extension by legislative enactment. But the hunger of slavery was insatiable. Joint resolutions and compromises soon failed to satisfy its continually increasing appetite, and served only to transform political parties into sectional parties. When these became crystallized, it was but a step to contemplate with equanimity the final separation. On the part of the slaveholders the basis of the argument was that the Union was a compact, terminable at the pleasure of a single State, and from this standpoint secession, and all the logical deductions of State sovereignty, could be marshalled in strongest array to enforce the most extravagant demands for the perpetuation of slavery. The continually reiterated threats of disunion did not fail to have their effect upon many of the less bold and independent Northern representatives, who yielded political power and principle to their numerical inferiors, and were content with temporary

compromises that served no better purpose than to put off the inevitable conflict between free and slave labor.

The phenomenal growth of the United States in wealth and population dates from the epoch of railroad construction in 1827, and in consequence of this more rapid means of intercommunication vast territories were opened up to settlers. But free labor was essential to this development, and hence the great numbers of immigrants could only be absorbed by the free States of the North and West without disturbing existing social conditions. For this reason the North soon became a network of railroads; manufacturing industries developed with marvelous rapidity, interstate commerce grew to magnificent proportions, and as a logical result of the operations of labor, unrestricted and unburdened by governmental interference, forests were cleared, fertile farms brought forth abundant food supplies, and populous cities sprang up as centers of distribution. In marked contrast was the condition of the South. Its fields were devoted to the cultivation of the great agricultural staples, cotton, sugar, tobacco, and rice, and its system of labor repelled immigration. Its means of internal intercourse were limited, and its social system peculiar. The three classes were separated from each other by well-defined lines as markedly, indeed, as if they belonged to different castes. An aristocracy composed of the great planters and members of the learned professions were the favored few, entitled to all the prizes of official position and the advantages of social distinction and leadership. Next in the scale were the small farmers, traders, storekeepers, artisans, and retainers of the aristocratic planters, forming a large middle class, filled with local prejudices, despising the slave, and loyal to their surroundings. And lastly came the slaves, the substratum upon which the whole system of labor was supported; necessarily kept in ignorance for the stability of the system, impulsive and affectionate in disposition, improvident and wasteful from being debarred from the

restraining influences of proprietorship, it may be said to their great credit that they labored for their masters with faithfulness unexcelled during a long war without any attempt at insurrection.

But so steadfast had been the faith of the plain people, as Mr. Lincoln called them, both North and South, in the efficacy of the Constitution to provide the blessings of peace and good government for them and their children, that they had no apprehension of serious trouble. They were concerned mainly with their material interests, and as their civil and religious liberty was unimpaired they paid but little attention to the impassioned utterances of their political leaders. In the North, political sentiment was healthy, for parties were equally divided, and there was free and unlimited discussion on all the questions of the day. They recognized the existence of slavery in the Southern States under the guarantees of the Constitution, but they wanted none of it for themselves, and were equally opposed to the views of the extremists on both sides of the question. In the South, discussion upon all public questions, save slavery, was as free as at the North; but upon this there was naturally neither free speech nor a free press. Adverse views were tabooed, for to express them was a crime. An oligarchy, controlled by the slaveholders, administered all offices of public trust, both State and national, and, as if by inalienable right, firmly established its members in political leadership. The effect of such restricted leadership upon a people is certain to be disastrous, for as Buckle, in his History of Civilization, says: "In the first place, by increasing the reputation of the ruling classes, it encourages that blind and servile respect which men are too apt to feel for those who are above them, and which, whenever it has been generally practised, has been found fatal to the highest qualities of the citizen, and therefore to the permanent grandeur of the nation. And, in the second place, it multiplies the resources of the executive government, and thus renders the country unable, as well as unworthy, to

correct the errors of those who are at the head of affairs."

The bold, aggressive, and able political leaders of the South had inherited that interpretation of the Constitution which the State rights theorists of South Carolina and Mississippi had advocated for so many years, but it derived its strength and sustenance wholly from slavery. Without this animating cause it would soon have ceased to live, but with it, the supremacy of the State became its willing and efficient instrument to befog the real issue, to deceive the people, and to destroy the nation. Deceived by the acquiescence of their political brethren of the North, lulled by the apparent apathy of the inhabitants of the free States, and misjudging the limits of their concessions, they hastened to take the irrevocable step and establish a confederacy based on the corner stone of slavery. The march of events had indeed been rapid. Men stood bewildered as the foundations of government seemed to crumble into dust. Many had uttered solemn warnings, but none had been able to suggest a satisfactory remedy. But among the few whose clear vision foresaw the inevitable consequences of the struggle between slavery and freedom, Mr. Lincoln stands preeminent. In his speech in the spring of 1858 he said: "In my opinion, this agitation will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. 'A house divided against itself can not stand.' I believe this Government can not endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South."

The election of Mr. Lincoln precipitated the crisis which had been so long impending. This was fol-

lowed by the secession of seven of the Southern States and the formation of the Southern Confederacy. In the interregnum that lasted until the first hostile shot was fired there was at first no general apprehension of war, though the people were bewildered and somewhat stupefied by the rapid evolution of events. Efforts were made to restore the previous equilibrium, even to a partial surrender of their cherished principles on the part of some of the leaders of the party that had won the victory at the polls, but these were without success. Delay was essential for the South to complete its solidarity and prepare for the warlike measures that were necessary to establish in the eyes of the world its status as an independent nation. But the time came when it was absolutely necessary to burn its bridges behind it and to do that deed which should forever cut off all possible hope of reconciliation. The political drama ended and the tragedy of war began when the misguided men of Charleston opened fire upon the national flag at Fort Sumter, April 12, 1861.

This first overt act of rebellion was big with consequences. It burst asunder the overstrained bonds of political expediency, swept away party lines, and crystallized at once the people into Unionists and Secessionists. The bewilderment of the North was but momentary, and then the awakening came with the piercing cry of outraged patriotism. And so, too, in the South the people rose up with complete unanimity to follow their leaders whithersoever they might lead. And thus were the mighty hosts gathered together to battle for freedom and for slavery.

In the war that followed a curious anomaly presents itself. Owing to many circumstances the Government of the United States was forced to conduct its military operations as if it had been a confederacy, while the Confederacy fought with all the advantages of a united nation. Under the entirely erroneous view that a standing army in a republic is a menace to the liberties of its people, the regular army of the United States had been so depleted as to be barely sufficient

to protect the frontier settlements, and was at this time, whether by accident or design, scattered by the Southern sympathizers of the previous cabinet into small detachments in the far West and South, so that the executive arm was practically paralyzed. The Administration was therefore compelled to call upon the Governors of the States that remained loyal for militia to preserve the Union. These regiments were officered by patriots, it is true, but they were uninstructed in the art of war, and it is not too much to say that the methods employed and results obtained were vastly more inefficient and costly than would have been the case had the nation constantly maintained a standing army of reasonable strength. In the South, on the contrary, a military despotism quickly grasped every source of power and directed the entire resources of the Confederacy for military success. With a vast servile population to cultivate food supplies and perform other necessary labor, a splendid race of men, endowed with fighting instincts, to form the rank and file, a daring, aggressive, and educated aristocracy imbued with a sense of their wrongs and believing that they were fighting for their liberties, to furnish the commissioned officers of high grade, it was scarcely possible to conceive of ultimate defeat. No wonder that at first success was with the South, and that it required four years of desperate fighting to end the war.

The condition of affairs at the North at this juncture presents an interesting study. The great mass of the people of both political parties, firm in their conviction that the results of the election would be peacefully accepted, continued their daily avocations without paying much attention to the threatening aspect of affairs in the South. But there were many thoughtful men who recognized the exceedingly critical condition of the country and were apprehensive. The political leaders of the successful party, East and West, were not themselves in such accord as to guarantee harmonious co-operation. Seward, the recognized leader of the new party, and the undoubted first choice of the

majority of the Republican delegates to the convention, had been set aside for Lincoln, on the grounds of political expediency which demanded certainty of success at the polls. As time progressed the responsible leaders of the coming Administration began to entertain grave doubts as to the attitude of their political opponents upon the serious questions that were demanding immediate settlement. The great Democratic party in the North had exhibited such popular strength at the late presidential election in November that the Administration was obliged to adopt tentative measures and feel the popular pulse at every step. A procedure by the strong arm of the Government against the citizens of Charleston in December might well have been justified by the good common sense of the people; but to invoke in April the military strength of the nation to coerce the return of a vast territory covered by seven States into the Union, was an entirely different thing. To spill the blood of American citizens and thus to inaugurate a civil war against a people who were simply asserting that the consent of the governed was the essence of free government, was so utterly repellent to a great and influential portion of the people of the North as to make such a course utterly inadmissible. And so, with what is now universally conceded to be the rarest wisdom and soundest judgment, Mr. Lincoln, in opposition to the counsel of his radical advisers, withheld his hand for the time being and apparently allowed matters to drift along without directive control. But all this time he was endeavoring, with true statesmanship, to secure the border States to the support of the Union, and the ultimate gain of Missouri, Kentucky, and West Virginia, even with the loss of tide-water Virginia, was an ample justification of the wisdom of his then much misunderstood temporizing policy. But of immeasurably greater importance was the necessity of forcing the initiative of war upon the South, and thus giving to the Administration the justification of entering upon the suppression of armed rebellion against the nation. Southern leaders

with characteristic boldness felt the dire necessity of "spilling blood" to cement the seething elements of their section into a compact and aggressive mass, and to force an immediate and irrevocable separation from the Union. The firing upon Sumter had far-reaching and unexpected consequences. It unified the people of the North, sweeping away for the time all party lines, and brought its vast population into immediate harmony with the Administration, heretofore the acknowledged chief of but a part. It crystallized the people of the South, giving them a national status in the eyes of European powers, a well-grounded hope of success, and a definite purpose to attain.

To the Republican party was now committed the administration of the affairs of the nation in this critical time of its history. Composed of the heterogeneous elements of the older political parties, it needed experience in administration to consolidate its ranks and to wield its power with confidence. Under its banners were radicals demanding pronounced declarations against slavery and advocating constitutional amendments to rid the country of the curse at once; moderates in greater number, willing to give the most generous guarantees for the perpetual protection of slavery in those States where it existed; and still others ready to yield everything asked for, to save the Union and avoid civil war. Amid the perplexities and confusion of the times the heroic figure of Mr. Lincoln stands pre-eminent, the best-beloved of the people, who was destined, under Divine Providence, to bring the nation out from under its terrible burden of affliction and to set it on in its career of unexampled prosperity. But at first his grand qualities were not generally known and his policy not understood. An efficient military force, the last resort of law in any nation, was lacking, for the regular army was small and scattered. He was debarred from exercising the constitutional provision of calling out the militia until an overt act of rebellion had been committed, and thus his hands were tied while the rebellious leaders were gathering strong

forces together to destroy the nation. But with infinite patience he bided his time, directing where he could not control, and ultimately justified his sagacity in the salvation of the nation.

The slave oligarchy of the South clearly perceived that the progress of civilization among the nations of Christendom was inimical to their favored institution, and that it was irrevocably doomed unless they could carve a new nation, based on the corner stone of slavery, out of the slave States of the American Union. They could see a possible expansion in the direction of Cuba and Mexico favorable to the cultivation of their great staples, which they considered so essential to the markets of the world. They felt, therefore, that if they could commit the great body of the white people of the Southern States to their scheme of a Southern Confederacy their task was certain of accomplishment, and this was more easily effected because State sovereignty was a political dogma universally accepted in all the Southern States. They differed from the North in having a greater relative number of agricultural people, which brought about less intercommunication and established more local and State pride than in the commercial and manufacturing States of the North. An appeal to this pride, a harangue as to their rights, and a picture of the wrongs intended by the abolition North sufficed to unite them into a compact body, ready to respond in thought and action to the direction of their leaders. It was essential for success that the true issues should be hidden and false ones substituted, and by preventing a free and calm discussion to violate the people's most sacred right of deliberation and choice. To accomplish this most unholy project neither the most unscrupulous agents nor the most unsavory means were lacking, and the people were hurried to take the final step under the conviction that their rights would be sooner secured outside of the Union than within it.

In considering the political history of those times in these latter days, it seems a mystery of the ages how

it was possible for the relatively few Southern leaders to bring the mass of their people to such a self-sacrifice of their material and moral interests for the establishment of human bondage under the sanction of explicit law. And we now see that the instrumentality by means of which this unholy project was to be utterly destroyed forever was war, and the continuance of war until freedom was proclaimed to the captive over the whole length and breadth of the land.

For a few weeks after the inauguration of Mr. Lincoln there was no apparent change in the policy of the Government with regard to the beleaguered forts, although it was becoming apparent to the most hopeful that the tension was rapidly approaching the point of rupture. Washington was full of Southern sympathizers who had hoped that something would occur to prevent the new Administration from being inducted into office, while the latter was forced to enter upon a waiting attitude until the march of events would justify decided action. And it was only after the firing upon Sumter that the Administration felt justified before the world in calling out the militia of the United States to repress insurrection and to execute the laws of the land. For several days thereafter the situation at Washington was fraught with extreme peril. The hope that the border States would without restraint remain loyal was now seen to be futile; it was even problematical whether the seat of Government could be securely held against the active efforts of the secessionists, and, considering the views that had been so freely expressed in the newspaper press with regard to the crime of coercing sister States, no one could certainly predict what would be the response of the people to the call of the President. But, fortunately, the people of the Northern States exhibited such a unanimity in support of the President that his hands were marvelously strengthened, the capital saved, and the people for the first time became nationalized. This unexpected unanimity startled the secessionists and destroyed their hope that there would be a divided

partisanship in the North, but at the same time it welded the Southern people into a homogeneous mass, so that the lines between the opposing forces became clearly and definitely marked for battle.

All hope of a peaceful solution had now disappeared, and although many believed that a single battle would settle the trouble, the more thoughtful could only contemplate the sad prospect of a prolonged struggle. It was soon made evident to the Administration that the defiant attitude of a few States had rapidly developed into the rebellion of a vast territory, engaging the moral support and entire material resources of its whole people. The strong Union sentiment which unquestionably existed among the Southern people, especially in Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia, was deceived by a false presentation of the purposes of the Administration and by political chicanery, so that it lost all cohesive power to bring the questions at issue to a free and open determination. The insurrection, guided by experienced and aggressive leaders, at a single bound became a nation whose liberty and existence were imperilled by a foreign foe. It embraced a hardy and vigorous race of men, capable of undergoing the severest hardships and endowed with those qualities so essential for an active military life. Their admirable fighting qualities and magnificent courage need no other nor higher encomium than that furnished in the records of the rebellion—a story of the remarkable endurance, heroic endeavor, and gallant bravery of the American citizen soldier. To the great bulk of the people of the South slavery had been a great but unrecognized curse, keeping them in isolation and in ignorance, and unjustly stigmatizing honest labor as something degrading to men; it was thus unconsciously enslaving the minds of the dominant race, and inflicting upon them greater evils than upon the negro.

The people of the Northern States had no fondness for war. Their avocations were decidedly against a state of war, but when the issue was presented squarely,

and it became evident that war was necessary to preserve the Constitution and the Union, then it was that this necessity, rather than a love of fighting, made them offer their services for the conflict. There had been but a very few militia organizations in the Northern States, and for this reason, as well as an inborn distaste for the restrictions of military discipline, the volunteer regiments that hurried to Washington were woefully wanting in everything that was necessary to make them efficient save their inherent patriotic spirit. But with this spirit everything was possible after a requisite period of training and discipline. Every one knows that the efficiency of an army depends upon that of its units, and hence upon its fundamental tactical unit, the company. Here, then, lies the power of the army as a fighting machine, and in the character of the company officers lies the weakness or strength of the whole army. Now in this respect the Confederates in the beginning of the war had greatly the advantage, for their company officers were better fitted by their training and habits than were those of the Northern volunteers. Several causes contributed to bring about this condition of affairs. In the first place, the agricultural South had paid more attention to military instruction in recent years than had the commercial North. With the exception of Florida and Texas, every Southern State had its military academy founded, and in part at least supported by the State, officered largely by West Point graduates, and superintended by choice officers, of whom Sherman, Stonewall Jackson, and D. H. Hill are notable examples. From these academies many of the best young men of the South were graduated annually, thoroughly trained for the subordinate positions of military life, and from whom were drawn valuable officers for the line and the staff at the outbreak of the war. Again, the choice for the presidency of the Confederate States had fallen upon Jefferson Davis, who, besides being himself an educated soldier, had had the great advantage, during his official life as Secretary of War under President Pierce,

of a personal acquaintance with many of the officers who had gone South, and had a personal knowledge of the character, attainments, and ability of every officer of rank in the Confederate service. And as his power in the new Confederacy was almost autocratic, he used this power and this knowledge in the assignment of commanders for every integral part of the Confederate army.

On the breaking out of the war the North had at its disposal a great number of educated officers, who were available for employment to the best advantage by using them to officer the volunteer levies. Unfortunately, the great influence of General Scott was directed to the support of the plan of keeping intact the regular army, in accordance with his experience in the Mexican War, and thus these officers were kept as subalterns in companies and regiments of the regular forces, and were lost to the volunteers at the very time when their services would have been most valuable. It is generally conceded that this was a grave error; for a long time every regular officer who through any influence was offered a position in the volunteers was refused permission to accept, and the command of regiments was often given to thoroughly incompetent men, to the great detriment of the service. Another cause which had a deterring influence was that at first the war was much misunderstood at the North, so that politics was supposed to have had more influence for military preferment than individual merit. Even in the selections for the vacancies in the new regular regiments many civilians having political influence received commissions giving them rank and command over able officers of long service. These were a few among the many causes which created in the commanders of our first organized forces an unwillingness to risk offensive battle except under preponderating conditions.

CHAPTER IV.

EARLY SERVICE IN OHIO AND WEST VIRGINIA.

During these anxious and trying times McClellan was keenly alive to the possibilities and almost certainty of war. As he himself says: "My old army associations had placed me in intimate relations with many Southern men, and I had traveled much in the South, so that I was perhaps better prepared to weigh the situation than the majority of Northern men. So strongly was I convinced that war would ensue, that when, in the autumn of 1860, I leased a house in Cincinnati for the term of three years, I insisted upon a clause in the lease releasing me from the obligation in the event of war." And when the startling news of the fall of Sumter bewildered for the moment the men of the North, it found him cool, collected, and ready. His manly bearing and dignified composure did much to allay the existing excitement surrounding him, which for a time threatened to be turned into unreasonable frenzy. Everybody turned to him for advice and counsel upon matters military, and his response was generous in the highest degree. Telegrams and messages seeking his services in this emergency came from New York and Pennsylvania, and he immediately set his business affairs in order to be free to accept military service. Replying to his friend Major Fitz-John Porter, who was then at Harrisburg organizing forces to open communication with Washington, he wrote, April 18: "Your welcome note has just reached me. I have already received an intimation that I have been proposed as the commander of the Pennsylvania forces, and asked if I would accept. Re-

plied, Yes. If General Scott would say a word to Governor Curtin in my behalf I think the matter would be easily arranged. Say to the general that I am ready as ever to serve under his command. I trust I need not assure him that he can count on my loyalty to him and the dear old flag he has so long upheld. I throw to one side all questions as to past political parties, etc.; the Government is in danger, our flag insulted, and we must stand by it. Though I am told that I can have a position with the Ohio troops, I much prefer the Pennsylvania service. I hope to hear something definite to-day, and will let you hear at once. Help me as far as you can."

A few days afterward he started for Pennsylvania, intending to stop for a few hours at Columbus to give Governor Dennison, of Ohio, some information about the condition of affairs in Cincinnati before continuing his journey. But this interview was destined to change completely McClellan's plans and expectations. The governor explained the difficulties under which he labored in the present exigencies from the lack of officers of military experience, and spoke of his desire of securing the services of a capable commander for the Ohio quota. Having measured the quiet, self-contained man that stood before him, and being favorably impressed by the evidences of his capacity for the work in hand, the governor formally tendered the command of the Ohio division to McClellan, and it was at once accepted. Within a few hours the Ohio Legislature, at the instance of the governor, passed an act which permitted the appointment of any resident of the State to the office of major general commanding the militia, and thus it was that McClellan abandoned his eastern trip and cast his lot with the Ohio State troops. On the same day, April 23d, Jacob D. Cox, Newton J. Schleich, and Joshua H. Bates were appointed brigadier generals, and without an hour's delay McClellan entered upon the performance of his duties.

Upon the acceptance of his commission, McClellan immediately resigned his position as president of the

Ohio and Mississippi Railroad Company, thereby sacrificing his comfortable salary of ten thousand dollars a year, his dearly loved home, and prosperous career at the call of his country, and so pressing were the demands of his new office that he was unable to return even for a brief moment to his desk in Cincinnati, which he had left so hurriedly to offer his services to the Government.

His first duty was to make an inspection of the arms and munitions of the State at the arsenal at Columbus. Accompanied by General Cox, who gives a graphic account of this visit, he found there a few boxes of smooth-bore muskets, which had once been issued to militia companies and had been returned rusted and damaged; no belts, cartridge boxes, or other accouterments; two or three smooth-bore brass six-pounder field guns, which had been honeycombed by firing salutes and of which the vents had been worn out, bushed, and worn out again. In a heap in one corner lay a confused pile of mildewed harness, which had once been used for artillery horses, but was now not worth carrying away. There had for many years been no money appropriated to buy military material, or even to protect the little the State had. The Federal Government had occasionally distributed arms which were in the hands of the uniformed independent companies, and the arsenal was simply an empty storehouse. It did not take him long to complete the inspection. At the door, as they were leaving the building, McClellan turned and, looking back into its emptiness, remarked, half humorously and half sadly, "A fine stock of munitions on which to begin a great war." *

The first problem which demanded McClellan's undivided attention was the preparation of estimates and detailed schedules for the equipment of ten thousand men, as a unit, for field service. For with such a unit as a working basis the State Legislature could under-

* Century, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, vol. i, p. 90.

standingly fix upon the money to be appropriated for present necessities and provide for future contingencies. At that time no one was better able than McClellan to supply the necessary information, for his military knowledge was comprehensive, well digested, and thorough; he knew not only the necessary munitions for equipment and supply, but the probable difficulties of procuring them in a land where the art of war had been so long neglected. His military education and experience were invaluable at that particular juncture, for the State officials were woefully ignorant and inexperienced in the military business which the exigencies of the times had so suddenly forced upon them.

The response of the people in all the loyal States to the call of the President was most patriotic and enthusiastic. The time for argument on the causes in dispute had forever passed away; party lines were temporarily obliterated, and with gratifying unanimity men of all shades of political opinion offered their services to support the Constitution, to enforce the laws, maintain the Union, and defend the flag. So grand was the uprising that more offered than could be accepted under the call. But the greater difficulty that confronted the loyal governors was to obtain arms and equipments for their respective quotas. With the exception of the munitions at the St. Louis arsenal there were no arms in the Western States, and no facilities for their manufacture on a scale sufficiently large to meet the immediate and pressing necessities. For a time all mail communication between Washington and the West was interrupted, and for a long period afterward was difficult and uncertain. Under these circumstances the authorities of the Western States were obliged, in their efforts to inaugurate the military power, to decide grave matters upon their own responsibility, without much counsel from the Administration at Washington.

In the latter days of April these disheartening conditions existed in Ohio, as they did elsewhere throughout the unprepared North, but McClellan had a great

capacity for unremitting labor and a genius for organization. His isolation from the seat of Government forced him to rely on his own counsel, but with the painful uncertainty as to whether his action would receive censure or commendation. Nevertheless he preserved a calm demeanor and gave no sign of apprehension, a course of conduct that inspired all about him with confidence. Encouraged by the prompt action of the Legislature, which authorized the governor to use the funds and to pledge the credit of the State for the purchase of arms, clothing, munitions, and equipments, he soon evolved order out of chaos in the organization of the new levies. He established his headquarters at Cincinnati for the more immediate dispatch of business, and rendezvoused the Ohio contingent at Camp Dennison, a station on the Little Miami Railroad about nineteen miles east of Cincinnati. Here the various regiments were assembled and instructed in drill and guard duty as rapidly as possible. The great lack of capable officers was a serious drawback affecting prompt disciplinary instruction, but under the circumstances it was not long before the fine body of men of the Ohio quota began to show their characteristic adaptability by their improved military bearing and soldierly appearance. Of course, at first, as was to be expected with new troops, the reaction from the excitement of enlistment, the unaccustomed restraints of camp life, the change of food and habits, combined with epidemics of mumps, measles, and diarrhœa, for a time depressed their spirits and weakened their patriotic resolves.

On May 13th McClellan received the order, issued on May 3d, placing him in command of the Department of the Ohio, which embraced the States of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. This extensive addition to his former command greatly increased his labors of administration and forced him to make long journeys of inspection, while at the same time he had no capable administrative officers to relieve him of the multifarious details that pressed themselves upon his attention for

prompt decision. He immediately dispatched a special messenger to Washington to lay before General Scott the condition of his command, with an urgent request for the assignment of some regular officers to assist him. It is natural for any commander to consider the immediate field of his own operations as of the first importance, and McClellan was no exception to the general rule. Consequently he felt aggrieved at the apparent neglect of the Washington authorities, who at this time, wholly occupied with their own pressing danger, had no leisure to pay attention to the passionate entreaties for help from other quarters. Finally, by his unceasing importunities, he succeeded in getting a few capable officers for some of the administrative departments, and others temporarily at least, by detaining them whenever they came within the limits of his command. In his attempts to get some cavalry and artillery he met with obstruction and rebuke from the general in chief, and it was only due to the assistance of the authorities of the States belonging to his territory that he finally succeeded in organizing a few batteries of field artillery and some companies of cavalry, which, however, were long left unequipped. In this terrible state of unpreparedness the Administration at Washington could do but little, and as a consequence the governors of the loyal States were forced to send agents abroad to secure, often in open rivalry with each other, whatever arms and munitions could be purchased in foreign markets, and thus it was that, instead of a single directive head, the war was at first managed by a multiplicity of rival States.

McClellan, in common with other military men throughout the country, was now experiencing the evils arising from the neglect which the nation had paid to the military profession. Even those otherwise better informed citizens, members of the learned professions, editors, statesmen, and political leaders, acted as if the musket and the uniform were the only requisites to transform a civilian into a soldier. All our disasters in battles on land can be attributed to such an unfortu-

nate misjudgment, while the honorable and successful record of the United States Navy on the seas is due to the fact that such an error has not as yet permeated its service to the detriment of its efficient *personnel*. And until the absolute necessity of exacting virtue, intelligence, and some degree of professional knowledge in those who aspire to the higher grades in the military service is clearly perceived, the nation will be obliged to pay the price of its criminal mistakes by the sacrifice of the lives of its best citizens in exchange for the mere political expediency of the passing moment. To create an army from raw levies is no simple task that any one can perform, nor can it be done in a moment. History furnishes repeated examples of its futility, but such lessons will avail little, however often repeated, in a country situated as is this of ours, where war is never anticipated and peace is the normal condition. Were it not for the free spirit and wonderful adaptability of the American people such a mismanagement of our military problems would have resulted in much more appalling disasters than we have as yet experienced; but should we come in conflict with a European power of even respectable military strength in the near future, it would not be difficult to predict the first unhappy consequences.

The amount and importance of the preliminary work done by McClellan in April, May, and June, 1861, in advising and aiding the State authorities of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois concerning enlistments, the location and management of camps of instruction, the selection of strategic points to be first occupied and placed in a state of defense, and in many other matters which his trained mind quickly perceived, have never been fully appreciated nor adequately recognized, for their importance and value have been overshadowed by subsequent events. Most opportunely for the nation he now occupied a position of commanding influence in the West, and his undoubted attainments and strength of character enabled him to use with great effect this influence to the best advantage for the in-

terests of the Government at a most critical period in its history.

The condition of affairs was something like this. Many of the inhabitants of the southern borders of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois had close affiliations with the South and their loyalty was extremely doubtful. The Confederates were gathering forces at Memphis and Union City, threatening Columbus, Ky., and Cairo, Ill.; the attitude of Kentucky, whether for or against the Union, was critical, and affairs in Missouri on the western and in West Virginia on the eastern border of McClellan's command were very threatening. It became a matter of supreme importance to save Kentucky to the Union.

The secessionists had the closest political affiliations with the State officials, the governor especially, and they were actively endeavoring to force the State into secession, although more than two thirds of the people of the State were in favor of the Union. General Buckner, who was at heart a secessionist, commanded the State guard and controlled the arms, supplies, and organization of the enrolled force, which he was using, as the military adviser of the governor, to force the State into the arms of the Confederacy. To accomplish this, he sought an interview with McClellan and endeavored to exact assurances from him that he would respect the position of neutrality which the officials of Kentucky had endeavored to assume. But McClellan was not deceived, and he expressly told Buckner that he had no power to guarantee the neutrality of the State, and at the same time assured him that he would not tolerate the presence of rebel troops in that State; and that, with or without orders, if he learned of their presence there he would drive them out without delay. His watchful care, firm attitude, and decisive tone gave heart to the Union men of the State, while the concentration of the Ohio troops at Camp Dennison overawed the disaffected element, discomfited the secession officials of the Kentucky State Government, and thus was the State itself saved to the Union. In a short time the Union

sentiment became sufficiently strengthened to be able to assert itself so that its vitality was never again placed in jeopardy.

Notwithstanding the multiplicity of details that the administration of his department forced upon his attention, his essentially cogitative mind busied itself very early with the grander problems of strategy. Indeed, on April 27th, only four days after his assignment to command, he submitted two plans to General Scott for his consideration. Both were based upon the employment of an active army, eighty thousand strong, to be raised in the Northwest, provided they could be armed and equipped by the General Government. With such an army he proposed to cross the Ohio at Gallipolis and move up the Great Kanawha on Richmond with the design of relieving Washington, and then, with the co-operation of the eastern army, secure the destruction of the Southern army. By the other plan, to be followed in the event of Kentucky assuming a hostile attitude, it was proposed to cross the Ohio at Cincinnati or Louisville, with a view of breaking the strength of Kentucky and Tennessee, and then march upon Montgomery, in co-operation with a movement of the eastern army upon Charleston and Augusta, the combined armies having Pensacola, Mobile, and New Orleans as the ulterior objective. General Scott, in his indorsement of May 2d submitting McClellan's letter to the President, assuming that these plans involved the use of the three months' men, whose term of service would expire by the time they were collected and organized, condemned them, and was otherwise not sparing of his adverse criticism. He closed by saying:

"4. His plan is, to subdue the seceded States by piecemeal, instead of enveloping them all (nearly) at once by a cordon of posts on the Mississippi, to its mouth from its junction with the Ohio, and by blockading ships of war on the seaboard. For the cordon a number of men equal to one of the general's columns would probably suffice, and the transportation of men

and all supplies by water is about a fifth of the land cost, besides the immense saving of time." *

This indorsement McClellan never saw, but General Scott wrote him a letter the next day, May 3d, outlining his own views in accordance with the plan of a cordon of posts down the Mississippi and a blockade along the seaboard, which was afterward known as the "Anaconda plan," as follows:

"1. It is the design of the Government to raise twenty-five thousand additional regular troops and sixty thousand volunteers for three years. It will be inexpedient either to rely on the three months' volunteers for extensive operations, or to put in their hands the best class of arms we have in store. The term of service would expire by the commencement of a regular campaign, and the arms not lost be returned mostly in a damaged condition. Hence I must strongly urge upon you to confine yourself strictly to the quota of three months' men called for by the War Department. 2. We rely greatly on the sure operation of a complete blockade of the Atlantic and Gulf ports soon to commence. In connection with such a blockade we propose a powerful movement down the Mississippi to the ocean, with a cordon of posts at proper points, and the capture of Forts Jackson and St. Philip, the object being to clear out and keep open this line of communication in connection with the strict blockade of the seaboard, so as to envelop the insurgent States, and bring them to terms with less bloodshed than by any other plan. For this end I suppose there will be needed from twelve to twenty steam gunboats, and a sufficient number of steam transports to carry all the *personnel* and *matériel* of the expedition; most of the gunboats to be in advance to open the way, and the remainder to follow and protect the rear of the expedition. This army, in which it is not improbable you may be invited to take an important part, should be composed of our best regulars for the advance, of three years' volunteers, all

* Official War Records, vol. cvii, p. 339.

well officered, and with four and a half months of instruction in camps prior to November 10th. In the progress down the river, all the enemy's batteries on its banks we of course would turn and capture, leaving a sufficient number of posts with competent garrisons to keep the river open behind the expedition. Finally, it will be necessary that New Orleans should be strongly occupied and securely held until the present difficulties are composed. 3. A word now as to the greatest obstacle in the way of this plan—the great danger now pressing upon us—the impatience of our patriotic and loyal Union friends. They will urge instant and vigorous action, regardless, I fear, of consequences; that is, unwilling to wait for the slow instruction of twelve or fifteen camps, for the rise of rivers and the return of frosts to kill the virus of malignant fevers below Memphis. I fear this, but impress right views, on every proper occasion, upon the brave men who are hastening to the support of the Government. Lose no time, while necessary preparations for the great expedition are in progress, in organizing, drilling, and disciplining your three months' men, many of whom, it is hoped, will be ultimately found enrolled under the call for three years' volunteers. Should an urgent and immediate occasion arise meantime for their services they will be more effective. I commend these views to your consideration, and shall be happy to hear the result." *

Events were now occurring in Western Virginia that caused McClellan's attention to be particularly directed to that region as of the most pressing importance. Governor Dennison had long felt the necessity of aiding the pronounced Union sentiment that pervaded the western counties of that State, and had suggested that McClellan should send some of the Ohio troops across the river as a measure of encouragement and support. But as the election was to be held very soon, McClellan thought it better to wait until

* Official War Records, vol. cvii, p. 369.

after this event, so that the people could express their convictions at the polls free from the presence of military force. But he saw no reason why he should not establish some of these regiments in near proximity to the important crossings of the Ohio to be available in case of necessity. Accordingly he posted the Sixteenth Ohio militia at Bellaire near Wheeling, the Fourteenth at Marietta, and the Eighteenth at Athens, both of the latter within reach of Parkersburg. These were some of the nine militia regiments that had been raised by Ohio, in addition to its quota of thirteen regiments under the call of the President.

It can scarcely be doubted that had the people of Virginia been permitted freely to exercise their will in regard to the question of secession, the popular vote would have been decidedly in the negative. But the records clearly show that the people were betrayed and that the State was dragooned into disloyalty. Once committed, however, to this action and under the pressure of an active military despotism, the greater bulk of the people at first acquiesced in the doctrine of the supremacy of State allegiance, and finally gave an active support to its necessary consequences. In that part of the State lying to the west of the Alleghanies, however, there dwelt a loyal population who were not blinded by the sophistries of States rights, and who, at the election held May 23d, pronounced most emphatically against secession. To overcome this defection Governor Letcher sent troops from the east to overawe them, and authorized the establishment of recruiting stations to antagonize the growing Union sentiment. This was soon found to be a most difficult task, and the practical application of the principle of secession to a part of the State was not relished by the State authorities. Under able leaders the friends of the Union soon gathered strength in Wheeling, Parkersburg, and in the counties bordering on the Ohio River. A regiment of Union volunteers was enlisted, under the command of Colonel B. F. Kelly, and a second regiment was soon in process of forma-

tion. In the meantime, however, a force of secessionists under Colonel Porterfield moved to Grafton, the junction of the two branches of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, burned the bridges at Fairmount, and thus blocked this essential line of communication from the west to the east.

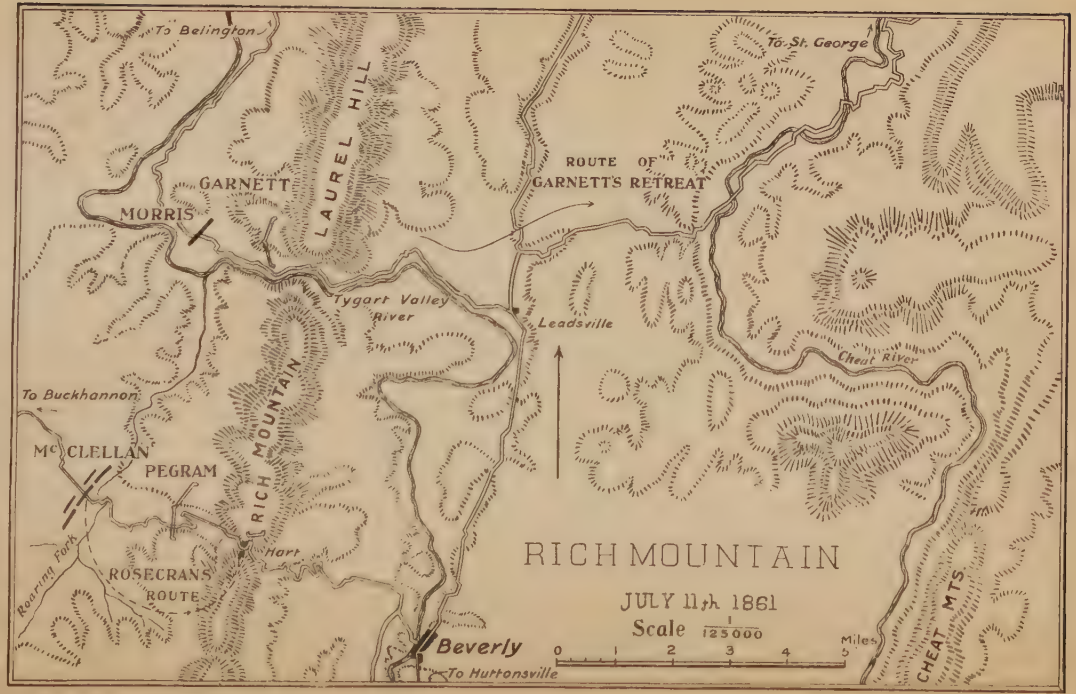
McClellan, then at Cincinnati, was notified by General Scott on the 24th of May: "We have certain intelligence that at least two companies of Virginia troops have reached Grafton, evidently with the purpose of overawing the friends of the Union in Western Virginia. Can you counteract the influence of that detachment? Act promptly." McClellan, hearing on the 26th of the destruction of the railroad bridges, immediately ordered Colonel Kelly to move from Wheeling to Grafton, and, the next day, the Ohio State troops to cross the Ohio and advance to the support of Kelly by the lines of railway from Wheeling and Parkersburg. He also directed General Morris, at Indianapolis, to move with two Indiana regiments to Wheeling or Parkersburg, selecting the most speedy and convenient route. This prompt action, seconded by the excellent behavior of the new troops, forced the enemy under Colonel Porterfield to retire from the railroad to Philippi, about twenty miles to the south.

General Morris reached Grafton with his troops June 1st and assumed command. Kelly had organized a force of fifteen companies to attack the enemy at Philippi that night, but Morris, to make the enterprise more successful, deferred the movement until the next night, and formed two columns, one of twenty-one companies under Colonel Kelly to take the left, and the other of nineteen companies and two field guns under Colonel Dumont to move from Webster by the right-hand road, both to reach the enemy's camp at four o'clock in the morning. Porterfield's strength was about six hundred effective infantry and one hundred and seventy-five cavalry, but owing to the inefficiency of his pickets and outpost service he was completely surprised, and had the two Union columns met at the

appointed time the whole garrison would have been captured. As it was, however, his loss was trifling, although he was obliged to abandon the greater portion of his baggage and equipments in his precipitate retreat beyond the mountains.

This dispersion of the only organized force of secessionists in the State west of the Alleghanies was very disheartening to the Virginia military authorities, and means were sought to regain their prestige in this region. To accomplish this, two columns were organized, one, under General H. A. Wise, to operate on the Kanawha line, and the other, under General R. S. Garnett, on the Cheat River line, the orders for which were issued June 6th and 8th, respectively. At this latter date Governor Letcher had, by proclamation, transferred the Virginia forces to the Confederate authorities, and some little delay necessarily occurred before the troops could be assembled and equipped for these two expeditions. Although the Virginia convention had passed in secret session the ordinance of secession, April 17th, it was not until June 25th that the result of the popular vote on the question of its ratification was announced. General Robert E. Lee, who had been appointed to command the military forces of the State immediately after he had resigned from the United States Army, April 20th, still retained general charge of affairs in West Virginia after the State forces had been transferred to the Confederacy, and he was especially anxious to strengthen Garnett to enable him to gain possession of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad at the Cheat River Bridge, the rupture of which at that point, as he expressed it, "would be worth to us an army."

The theater of operations of Garnett's column, with which this campaign is alone concerned, was the western flank of the broken and difficult country formed by the series of parallel ridges of the Alleghanies that separate West Virginia from the Shenandoah Valley just south of the Potomac River. Many mountain streams, tributary to the Monongahela, flowing in a


To Belington
To St. George
LAUREL HILL
ROUTE OF
GARNETT'S RETREAT
GARNETT
MORRIS
Tygart Valley
River
Leadsville
Cheat River
To Buckhannon
RICH MOUNTAIN
McCLELLAN
PEGRAM
Hart
ROSECRANS
ROUTE
Roaring Fork
RICH MOUNTAIN
JULY 11th 1861
Scale 1/25000
0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles
Beverly
To Huttonsville
CHEAT MTS.

general northerly direction through the intervening valleys, add to the difficulties of the terrain and necessitate the construction of many substantial bridges for crossing the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad over them. The principal of these streams are the Tygart Valley and Cheat Rivers; the former, passing by Beverly, breaks through the gap separating Rich and Laurel Mountains, flows thence on to Philippi and Grafton, while the latter, flowing through the valley east of Cheat Mountain, crosses the railroad near Rowlesburg. The possession of the railroad at Cheat River and the destruction of this bridge were among the principal objects of Garnett's expedition.

The main avenue of communication between northwestern Virginia and Staunton in the Shenandoah Valley was the Staunton and Parkersburg turnpike, which, leaving Staunton, passes through Monterey, over Cheat Mountain to Huttonsville, and thence to Beverly; here the road forks, the Parkersburg branch crossing by a gap in Rich Mountain to Buckhannon and thence to the Ohio, while the Grafton branch turns the southern extremity of Laurel Hill near Leadsville and follows the valley of the Tygart River.

These two gaps at Laurel Hill and Rich Mountain were therefore the gates through which communication could be had between the east and the west, and to secure them to his possession Garnett strongly defended them by intrenchments, abatis, and wood slashings, while he was gathering his forces together in anticipation of a forward movement.

McClellan had all along believed that the true line of operations in West Virginia was by the line of the Kanawha River, having for his objective the Virginia and East Tennessee Railroad, whose possession would enable him to strengthen the loyalists of the mountainous region of the three nearby States, and at the same time threaten the left flank of the Confederate forces gathering at Manassas. But the concentration of Garnett's force at Beverly compelled him to abandon for the present the Kanawha plan, and to direct his atten-

tion to the frustration of the enemy's design against the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. He had been detained at his headquarters at Cincinnati until the 21st of June attending to the multifarious duties of his extensive department, and to the reorganization of the volunteers into three years' regiments under the second call of the President. Reaching Parkersburg on the 22d, he hastened his troops forward in every possible way, and the next day proceeded to Grafton, where he made a study of the situation and formulated the general plan of his intended campaign. This he communicated to the War Department on the 23d; in general outline, it was briefly as follows: To secure his left flank on the Cheat River line first, then to move with the remainder of his "available force from Clarksburg on Buckhannon, then on Beverly, to turn entirely the detachment at the Laurel Mountain. The troops at Philippi will advance in time to follow up the retreat of the rebels in their front. After occupying Beverly I shall move on Huttonsville and endeavor to drive them into the mountains, whither I do not propose to follow them, unless under such circumstances as to make success certain. Having driven out the mass of their troops, and having occupied the pass by which they might return, I propose moving small columns through the country to reassure the Union men and break up any scattered parties of armed rebels. As soon as practicable, I intend to clean out the valley of the Kanawha."

To carry on his campaign, McClellan had collected twenty-seven regiments of infantry, four batteries of artillery of six guns each, two troops of cavalry, and a company of rifles, or, in all, a force of about twenty thousand men. This force was divided into three commands: one, of about five thousand men, under General C. W. Hill, was assigned to guard the Cheat River line and the railroad west from Grafton; another, of about the same strength, under General Morris, formed a strong brigade at Philippi, intended to be sent on the road to Leadsville to hold the enemy in check at Laurel

Hill; while the remainder, comprising three brigades, commanded by Generals Rosecrans, Schleich, and R. L. McCook, under McClellan's personal supervision, was to move from Buckhannon on the Beverly road to turn the enemy's position at Rich Mountain.

To resist this considerable force General R. S. Garnett had about forty-five hundred men, of which he placed about thirteen hundred at Rich Mountain, under Lieutenant-Colonel Pegram, and with the remainder he himself occupied the pass at Laurel Hill. Other troops were on their way from Staunton to strengthen him, but only one regiment, the Forty-fourth Virginia, had reached Beverly before the action took place, and this, owing to its tardy arrival, could not be utilized, except to be placed on the right of the Beverly road to protect Pegram's right from being turned by the wood road that came into the Beverly road near the village. Though both of these positions were rudely intrenched, each had four guns, and these, with infantry supports, were capable of offering strong resistance to a front attack by inexperienced troops. Their main weakness lay in the fact of their isolation from each other, that at Laurel Hill being sixteen miles from Beverly, and that at Rich Mountain five, so that neither commander could rely upon the other for assistance in case of attack.

Before leaving Grafton McClellan issued a timely proclamation to the inhabitants of Western Virginia defining his purpose, and assuring them of his intention religiously to respect all their rights of person and property, and a manly address to his troops urging them "to the performance of the highest and noblest qualities of soldiers—discipline, courage, and mercy." In Napoleonic style he closes his address: "Soldiers, I have heard that there was danger here. I have come to place myself at your head and to share it with you. I fear now but one thing: that you will not find foemen worthy of your steel. I know that I can rely upon you."

He had at first hoped to reach Buckhannon June 25th, but with new troops entering for the first time

upon an active campaign, and directed by an inexperienced staff, he found many unexpected difficulties, and it was not until July 2d that his headquarters were established there. Here he was obliged to remain five days, fully occupied in clearing the vicinity of roving bands of secessionists, closing up his command, and arranging the details for the contemplated expedition of General Cox on the line of the Great Kanawha in co-operation with his own campaign. Everything being in readiness by the evening of July 6th, Morris was directed to move from Philippi early the next morning by the road leading to Garnett's position and occupy a position within two miles of the enemy's defenses. From this position he was to push out strong infantry reconnoissances, to hold Garnett in his front, and convey the impression that the main attack was to be made at Laurel Hill. McClellan, with the main body, moved out from Buckhannon the same morning, following the Beverly road, intending to turn the position at Rich Mountain, gain the rear of the enemy at Beverly, and thus cut Garnett off from his line of retreat.

McClellan's column reached Roaring Fork, about two miles in front of Pegram's intrenchments, on the afternoon of the 9th, and there went into bivouac until a reconnoissance could be made to ascertain the difficulties in its front. This was accomplished the next morning, and McClellan became convinced that the position was too strong to hazard a frontal attack with his inexperienced troops, and concluded to delay until he could establish some batteries in a position that his engineer officer, Captain Poe, had found on his right, and which commanded Pegram's intrenchments. But about ten o'clock that night Rosecrans reported to him that he had found a guide acquainted with a wood path, by which a body of infantry could move around Pegram's left flank and come out at Hart's farm on the top of Rich Mountain, and thus interpose itself between Beverly and Pegram's camp. After a careful study of the project McClellan adopted it, and confided its exe-

cution to a selected body of infantry and a company of cavalry aggregating nineteen hundred men, under the immediate command of General Rosecrans. It was arranged between them that Rosecrans was to send back hourly messengers to McClellan to give an account of progress, and that McClellan should keep a careful watch on Pegram's camp and be ready to assail it when he heard the sound of Rosecrans's attack in its rear.

Pegram had arranged to guard his right flank from a possible turning movement, but was entirely ignorant of this obscure path on his left, the country being exceedingly rough and well wooded. But in the course of the day one of Rosecrans's messengers was captured by the enemy's pickets, and Pegram immediately detached about three hundred men and one gun to Hart's farm to oppose Rosecrans. The latter, after a very toilsome journey in the rain, did not reach his objective until after one o'clock, and it was not until after four o'clock that he succeeded in driving the enemy from the position. The sound of the conflict reached McClellan later than he had expected, and while watching the commotion in Pegram's camp he interpreted it as indicating success on their part and the defeat of Rosecrans. Under this uncertainty, and not having heard from the latter, he did not deem it wise to order an attack upon Pegram's front, and therefore, as dusk approached and the contest seemed to be over, he withdrew his forces to their camps at Roaring Fork, expecting to continue the next day the construction of his artillery work. Early the next morning, however, Rosecrans's men coming down the road found Pegram's camp abandoned, and McClellan then for the first time learned of the success of the turning movement.

Garnett, having heard of the disaster at Rich Mountain, abandoned his position at Laurel Hill early the next morning and endeavored to effect his retreat by way of Beverly, and had indeed arrived within five miles of this place when he was erroneously informed that it was in possession of the Union troops. His

only chance, then, of escape was to retrace his steps to Leadsville and attempt the difficult route by way of Saint George up the Cheat River Valley. General Morris, in command of the Union forces in Garnett's front, did not learn of the latter's retreat until late in the morning of the 12th, and when he did hear of it his troops were not ready for an immediate advance, and thus Garnett had some hours the start.

McClellan's advance did not occupy Beverly until about noon, half an hour too late to capture some fifty of Pegram's men that had made their way over the mountain during the night from Pegram's camp. The remainder of Pegram's command, after vainly endeavoring to reach Garnett, and suffering much from fatigue and hunger, surrendered themselves to McClellan; they numbered thirty officers and five hundred and sixty men. The Forty-fourth Virginia Regiment, which had been stationed on the eastern slope of Rich Mountain, near Beverly, and had not therefore participated in the action, together with those that had escaped from the garrison, retreated from Beverly toward Huttonsville before McClellan occupied the village. But it was now important to take such steps as would result in capturing, if possible, the main force of the enemy, which was then endeavoring to make its way north and escape by way of Saint George.

It was evident that if General Hill could have had ample time to collect his forces along the line of the railroad he could interpose a sufficient force to block the mouth of the valley by which Garnett was retreating, and at the same time the latter could be followed by the troops under General Morris. Unfortunately, McClellan was not in possession of the actual facts of the case until after midday of the 12th, and his line of telegraph terminated at his former camp at Roaring Creek, distant seven miles from Beverly. Hill, at Grafton, did not receive telegraphic information from McClellan until about noon of the 13th, and then started with twenty-five hundred men for West Union to head off Garnett's command. He reached this position with

three companies of his advanced guard on the morning of the 14th, only to learn that the enemy, taking advantage of a road bordering Horse Shoe Run, had passed Red House, eight miles to the east, at five o'clock that morning and had made good his escape.

After some delay in getting together provisions, a pursuing force was organized from General Morris's command, comprising a strength of about eighteen hundred men, under the direction of Captain Benham, to follow after Garnett on the road he took after leaving Leadsville. The weather was stormy, the roads very difficult, and Garnett had some hours the start. But Benham succeeded in harassing Garnett's rear guard and forcing the latter to halt from time to time in order to give his wagons a chance to make good their escape. At Carrick's Ford, however, Garnett was killed in a skirmish while endeavoring to bring off his rear guard, and shortly after the pursuit was abandoned. In this retreat Garnett lost some killed, wounded, and prisoners, besides a portion of his wagons and baggage, but his main forces effected their escape, though much impaired in morale and discipline.

After having thus provided for the pursuit of Garnett's force, McClellan followed the road to Huttonsville to overtake, if possible, that portion of the enemy that had retreated in that direction. But fear lent them wings, and they did not stop until they met re-enforcements in the vicinity of Monterey; meanwhile the Union troops occupied Huttonsville after a brief skirmish with a small cavalry force, and then hastened to occupy Cheat Mountain Pass, which, being gained, gave McClellan control of the main line of communication between the upper Shenandoah Valley and northwestern Virginia. All the Confederate organized force having been thus defeated or dispersed and the avenues effectually blocked, the campaign on the northerly line of operations was ended, and McClellan directed his attention to that of the Kanawha River line.

This, it will be remembered, was inaugurated by the

orders of McClellan, dated July 2d, at Buckhannon, directing General Cox, then at Camp Dennison, Ohio, to assume command of the First and Second Kentucky and Twelfth Ohio Regiments and move to the Kanawha. His instructions confined him to a defensive attitude and a cautious advance until McClellan's operations had cut off the enemy's retreat from Charlestown by the route through Beverly. But before Cox's troops could be concentrated on the Ohio and the movement up the Kanawha begun, the action at Rich Mountain had occurred and McClellan was able to turn his attention to a plan of giving Cox material assistance in the latter's operations against General Wise. This was, to move with six regiments by way of Huttonsville, Summerville, and Dogwood Ridge, to cut off whatever force of the enemy there might be in the lower valley of the Kanawha, and with Cox's force turn upon Wise and drive him from the State. But while he was in the midst of the preparations for this enterprise he received orders to turn over his command to General Rosecrans and to proceed at once to Washington.

The success of McClellan's West Virginia campaign was unduly magnified by the newspaper press throughout the North, and it was the immediate cause of his being called to Washington to receive that substantial promotion that his talents as an army commander seemed to justify. A careful analysis of its main incidents and their influence upon his mental processes is, however, exceedingly instructive in giving a just estimate of his characteristic qualities of leadership, which, being peculiarly his own, must ever be in evidence throughout his whole career.

The strategic bent of his mind is shown in the admirable plan of campaign submitted June 23d, immediately upon his arrival at Grafton from Ohio. It was admirable because it could have been carried out to its successful issue by any subordinate commander with the greatly preponderating strength that was available. His movements were slow, for his cautiousness grew as he approached the field of battle. "Assure the gen-

eral," says he in his letter of July 5th, "that no prospect of a brilliant victory shall induce me to depart from my intention of gaining success by maneuvering rather than by fighting. I will not throw these raw men of mine into the teeth of artillery and intrenchments if it is possible to avoid it. Say to the general, too, that I am trying to follow a lesson long ago learned from him—i. e., not to move until I know that everything is ready, and then to move with the utmost rapidity and energy. The delays that I have met with have been irksome to me in the extreme, but I felt it would be exceedingly foolish to give way to impatience, and advance before everything was prepared." And his anxiety expressed in the concluding paragraph of his letter of July 10th—"Please send me more regular officers; some old regiments, if possible. I want those mountain guns at once. I have great difficulties to meet, but have gone into them knowing that the general will give me support as I need it, and that he will appreciate my position"—is indicative of the fact that his constitutional timidity was in full possession of his mind, though he had just expressed himself as "sure of success in any event."

This apprehensive anxiety on the eve of battle that betrayed his lack of aggressiveness at the supreme moment is also exhibited when, hearing the sound of Rosecrans's guns at Rich Mountain and interpreting the actions of the enemy unfavorably, he withdrew his command at the time when a bold leader would have led his troops to the assault. And thus it happened that he was never personally tested in battle as a commander in the whole of the campaign, since the only fighting was done by Rosecrans's command of nineteen hundred men at the top of Rich Mountain, and by Benham's eighteen hundred in pursuit of Garnett on the Leadsville road.

In addition, when we consider that Garnett should not have been allowed to escape, by a timely instruction to General Hill to guard the only possible route left, after the capture of Beverly, the well-defined objective

of McClellan's expedition, and that he nevertheless did so escape, it is beyond any satisfactory explanation to justify the extravagant language McClellan employed in his congratulatory order to his soldiers on the termination of the campaign:

SOLDIERS OF THE ARMY OF THE WEST:

I am more than satisfied with you. You have annihilated two armies, commanded by educated and experienced soldiers, intrenched in mountain fastnesses fortified at their leisure. You have taken five guns, twelve colors, fifteen hundred stand of arms, one thousand prisoners, including more than forty officers—one of the two commanders of the rebels as a prisoner, the other lost his life on the field of battle. You have killed more than two hundred and fifty of the enemy, who has lost all his baggage and camp equipage. All this has been accomplished with the loss of twenty brave men killed and sixty wounded on your part.

You have proved that Union men, fighting for the preservation of our Government, are more than a match for our misguided and erring brethren; more than this, you have shown mercy to the vanquished. You have made long and arduous marches, often with insufficient food, frequently exposed to the inclemency of the weather. I have not hesitated to demand this of you, feeling that I could rely on your endurance, patriotism, and courage.

In the future I may have still greater demands to make upon you, still greater sacrifices for you to offer. It shall be my care to provide for you to the extent of my ability; but I know now that by your valor and endurance you will accomplish all that is asked.

Soldiers, I have confidence in you, and I trust you have learned to confide in me. Remember that discipline and subordination are qualities of equal value with courage. I am proud to say that you have gained the highest reward that American troops can receive—the thanks of Congress and the applause of your fellow-citizens.

CHAPTER V.

ORGANIZATION OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.—SUCCEEDS SCOTT AS GENERAL IN CHIEF.

We now turn to the events that had occurred in the vicinity of Washington just after the temporary isolation of the city from the North had been removed by the prompt arrival of the Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania militia regiments. Virginia had passed the ordinance of secession in secret session, April 17th, and the posture of Maryland was not only alarming, but critical. The capital of the nation was surrounded on every side by a people hostile in sentiment, while those within were permeated with the poison of treachery. Its unfortunate situation made its tenure precarious, while it was a matter of the first importance that it should be securely held; and when this was made certain for the present emergency by the increasing numbers of three months' volunteers pouring in from the nearby Northern States, the crushing burden of anxiety was lifted from the minds of those who had reason to be gravely apprehensive. The safety of the capital being assured, it was next in order to determine what use should be made of the troops—which to the uninstructed public mind of that day seemed a great and invincible army—before their term of service should expire. The vulnerability of the city to attack by artillery from the Virginia side of the Potomac justified the invasion of the "sacred soil," and accordingly on the night of May 23d some regiments were moved across Long Bridge and occupied Arlington Heights, and others, by water, under the protection of the navy, took possession of Alexandria.

This procedure was clearly in accord with the views of General Scott, upon whom the Administration relied for advice, but his military instincts were decidedly opposed to the employment of the three months' levies for an offensive campaign, as his letter to McClellan, already quoted, clearly shows. General Irwin McDowell, a major of the regular army, was appointed to the immediate command of the troops, and under great difficulties was endeavoring to organize them into some semblance of an army. General Patterson was also collecting a considerable number of equally raw troops in the near vicinity of Harper's Ferry. In the meanwhile the Confederate forces had seized Manassas Junction, thus controlling the communications to Richmond and the Shenandoah Valley, and were preparing, under General Beauregard, to advance upon Washington, while General Johnston was concentrating forces at Winchester to oppose Patterson. Such was the situation late in June, when in obedience to the constantly increasing but intemperate demand of the public press an immediate advance of the Union army toward Richmond was, by the unanimous vote of the President and his Cabinet, decided upon at a Cabinet meeting held June 29th. This action, though in complete accord with the optimistic temper of the people, could hardly be justified even by the undoubted pressing political considerations of the time, and only then when certainty of success was assured. However, the more prudent military judgment of the general in chief was overborne, a plan of campaign was called for and submitted, and preparations for its prosecution immediately inaugurated.

In general outline the plan decided upon was for Patterson to hold Johnston at Winchester to prevent the latter re-enforcing Beauregard, while McDowell was to move by way of Fairfax Court House, cross the Occoquan below its junction with Bull Run, and by an attack on the right flank gain the enemy's railway communications. Information derived from reconnoissances led to a change of plan, so that it was deter-

mined to attack the enemy's left. For this purpose Hunter's and Heintzelman's divisions, aggregating about twelve thousand men, were directed to march at early daylight on the 21st, and by a flank movement cross Bull Run at Sudley Spring Ford so as to take the defenses of the Stone Bridge in the flank and rear. Tyler's division was directed to move by the Warrenton turnpike, threaten the enemy's forces at the Stone Bridge, and at the proper time carry it, join the turning column, and with it deliver battle on the enemy's left flank. The remaining division of the army under Miles was held in reserve at Centreville, one of its brigades to make a false attack on Blackburn's Ford. It so happened that Beauregard, having been re-enforced by some of Johnston's troops from the Valley, had intended to attack that morning by his right flank, directing himself upon Centreville, and gain possession of McDowell's line of retreat, and for this purpose the brigades of his army were awaiting orders at the fords of Bull Run, which they held from the Stone Bridge to Union Mills. Notwithstanding the difficulties that delayed the march of McDowell's turning column, by which the flank attack began some hours later than was intended, the advantage was at first greatly with the Union forces. But at about three o'clock in the afternoon the tide of battle turned, when the right of the Union line gave way under a severe musketry fire from some of Johnston's troops, just then arriving on the field. The retreat began in good order, but the disorganization caused at first by the congestion of the lines of retreat, and afterward by the loss of control of the troops by their officers, overwhelmed them in a panic that ended in a disgraceful flight toward Washington. General Patterson was severely censured for his failure to hold Johnston's army at Winchester, and in public opinion he was held responsible for this disaster. For a long time he was compelled to bear the odium of this censure, and it was not till long after that he found an opportunity to publish, in justification of his conduct, an exposition of the

difficulties of his position, the orders he had received, and the measures he had employed. Taking everything into consideration, McDowell deserved success, and it is now generally conceded that had his flank attack been made at the hour intended, or even a few hours before it was, as was possible, the Confederate army would likely have paralleled toward Richmond the flight of the Union army toward Washington. The behavior of the troops in action, considering their rawness, was admirable, but they were not sufficiently trained for an offensive campaign. The component parts of the brigades and divisions had been brought together only a few days before, and both troops and commanders were alike unacquainted with each other. The company and regimental units were commanded by inexperienced officers, who generally were ignorant of their duties, and had not acquired that confidence of their men so essential to hold them up to their work at the critical moment. It is true that the Confederates were equally raw, but they had the advantage of fighting a defensive battle under less fatigue, and their company and subaltern officers were better fitted for command by reason of a longer experience at a time when a few months' length of service gave a preponderating advantage.

In view of the long and bloody struggle that was to follow, this disaster, humiliating and distressful as it was, had its compensations. It demonstrated to the people of the North that the war was not to be ended by any single summer campaign of militia, but was to be fought out to the death between trained forces marshaled in support of principles so antagonistic that compromise was absolutely impossible. After the first brief moment of despair and dismay the Administration, as a first step to inspire confidence, turned to the one general who up to this time had achieved the reputation of being able to handle troops in the field with success, and ordered him at once to Washington. And Congress, relying upon the characteristic grim determination of the loyal people of the North, speedily

voted five hundred thousand men and five hundred million dollars as an evidence that the war was to be vigorously prosecuted.

The selection of General McClellan to command the Division of the Potomac gave general satisfaction. Success in war is everything, and his brilliant campaign in West Virginia was contrasted with the disaster at Bull Run to enhance his military reputation and prepare the way for his most flattering welcome by the President and other high dignitaries of the nation. Unfortunately for his own sake, he was placed upon too high a pedestal in the beginning of his active career, and in truth it must be said that he was in a measure responsible for this undue elevation. His glowing dispatches gave a coloring entirely too brilliant to the exploits of his army in West Virginia, and though they heartened the nation at the time of its disaster and were pardonable in the early period of the war, yet it would have been better for him to have been content with a more modest recital of his operations. The intemperate hero worship to which he was immediately subjected was bound to be followed by an equally unjust adverse criticism at the very time when he needed strength and united support. Any just estimate of McClellan's character and attainments at this time must be drawn from the story of his previous record in correlation with the testimony of personal friends, and that which he himself has given in his unguarded moments. From all these sources it is abundantly manifest that he was ever actuated by the most devoted patriotism and thorough loyalty to his country. With a heart single and free from all ulterior purpose of personal benefit, he was ready for any sacrifice at the call of duty. He had no distrust of his own ability, for his successful academic career at West Point, his experience in the Mexican War, and indeed all the honorable attention that he had received from the Government in various positions of trust and responsibility, in all of which he felt that he had creditably acquitted himself, combined to strengthen his own favorable esti-

mate of himself. And, indeed, he had good reason to be proud of his achievements. Called suddenly to the command of one of the most important military departments of the country—that of the Ohio—and practically left to the guidance of his own counsels, his administration was admirable, and justly commended. He strengthened the hands of the governors of the Western States at a time of vital importance, when the General Government was in the midst of immediate and pressing peril. His strong character, personal dignity, and incorruptible honesty were admirably adapted to give tone and direction to the first levies that hastened to the support of the Government—characteristics which remained with them all through their service. The nation need never despair so long as it can retain such men as McClellan in its official service. But now that he had come to Washington with the prestige of the victorious general, and was everywhere received with such flattering marks of appreciation, he fell into the grave error that the safety of the capital and the success of the cause depended alone upon his skill and efforts. It may well be imagined that his advent at Washington restored hope to the despairing, for he possessed a dignity of demeanor, a soldierly bearing, and composure of manner well calculated to strengthen a situation so depressing and so precarious. But excessive adulation is dangerous to any man, and McClellan could not escape its insidious effects upon himself nor its reflex action upon the public mind, that expected results wholly incommensurate with his as yet undeveloped military capacity to command a great army.

The Division of the Potomac, to which McClellan had been assigned, comprised the forces in the Department of Northeastern Virginia under McDowell and those of the Department of Washington under Mansfield, and, in obedience to the orders of the War Department, he assumed command July 27th. With commendable promptness he proceeded to make himself acquainted with the condition of the troops, and to

learn what he could with regard to his surroundings. He found the defenses of the city exceedingly weak, consisting only of Forts Runyon and Allan covering the approach to the Long Bridge, Fort Corcoran, one at the Aqueduct Bridge, and Fort Ellsworth in front of Alexandria. A few small batteries adjacent to these forts, and one on the Maryland side of the river at the Chain Bridge, comprised the then existing works of defense. The condition of affairs, as it then appeared to him, "was one of extreme difficulty and fraught with great danger. The defeated army of McDowell could not properly be called an army—it was only a collection of undisciplined, ill-officered, and uninstructed men, who, as a rule, were much demoralized by defeat and ready to run at the first shot. Positions from which the city could be commanded by the enemy's guns were open for their occupation. The troops were insufficient in numbers as in quality. The period of service of many regiments had expired or would do so in a very few days. There was so little discipline that officers and men left their camps at their own will, and, as I have already stated, the city was full of drunken men in uniform. The executive was demoralized; an attack was expected from hour to hour; material of war did not exist in anything like sufficient quantities; and, lastly, I was not supreme and unhampered, but often thwarted by the lieutenant general." *

The army at that time consisted of about fifty thousand infantry, less than one thousand cavalry, and six hundred and fifty artillery, with nine imperfect field batteries comprising thirty pieces; and while it is true that the troops were temporarily demoralized, it is but just to say that this had not resulted from lack of courage or of the manly virtues in the rank and file, but rather from a distrust in the capacity of their officers to lead them—more especially of their regimental and company commanders. The best troops in the world, officered as these were by the vicious system of election,

* McClellan's Own Story, p. 68.

would fail the best general; but these men of the rank and file, when afterward they came under the command of officers of spirit, educated for their profession or trained by war, were never surpassed. With the exception of two regiments at the Chain Bridge on the Maryland side, the army was distributed in and near the forts from Long Bridge to Alexandria in unhealthy camps, whose locality was unsuited for a proper defense of the city.

It was not long before the influence of McClellan's personality became evident. A provost guard of regular troops, under the command of Colonel Andrew Porter, very quickly established order in the city, officers and men were forbidden to leave their camps without written authority, better sites for regimental camps were chosen, and immediate measures were taken for the daily drill, instruction, and discipline of the troops. Inefficient and worthless officers were eliminated from the army upon the recommendations of boards of officers established for that purpose, the lazy and indifferent were cautioned, the eager and zealous heartened, and a new spirit very quickly pervaded the whole army. Under the deep conviction that the army as it was then organized could not respond to the demands soon to be made upon it, McClellan determined to reorganize it as speedily as possible.

To this congenial task of reorganization McClellan brought the love of order and system, a thorough knowledge of detail, and an insistent habit of mind that nothing could deflect from its purpose. But in such a process difficulties continually arise, often seemingly insuperable, that test the temper, weaken the efforts, and discourage the ablest of men. Especially is this so in a government by the people, where newspaper editors and other self-constituted exponents of public opinion are first in the field with their impatient suggestions; then personal influence, exerted through potent political leaders, for rank and command can not always be ignored; financial considerations become pressing, foreign relations threatening, and haste is

urgently demanded. Fortunately for McClellan, some of these disturbing elements were, for the moment, silenced by the appalling disaster of Bull Run and the immediate necessity for the security of Washington. And so gradually the historic Army of the Potomac began to assume the form and imbibe the spirit that enabled it to withstand through so many bloody battles the strenuous efforts of its worthy rival, the Army of Northern Virginia, to overthrow it.

McClellan had a well-settled conviction in his own mind in regard to what he wished to accomplish, for he had studied to some purpose the organization of the principal armies of Europe. He knew the function of each arm of the service, the details of its equipment and organization, and its relative value in combination with others; and in adjusting the line or fighting force of the army he wished to bring the several arms into such numerical relation with each other as would best conform to the experience of war; and then to perfect by constant drill and discipline the various tactical units, and finally to consolidate them into brigades and divisions, and, when the time was ripe, into army corps under competent commanders. He clearly perceived the great importance of a competent staff to direct, inspect, and supply the fighting force, and therefore devoted much anxious thought to the selection of the chiefs to administer its several departments and insure life and mobility to the army. He was therefore working under a systematic plan, which under the most favorable circumstances would have required a considerable time for its development. But, as it was, he encountered the greatest difficulty from the scarcity of instructed officers, particularly in staff duties, to aid him, because in our military peace establishment there had been no general staff corps to train such officers. The general may be likened, in the organization of an army, to the brain that plans, the staff to the nerves that see, hear, and obey, and the fighting force to the members that march and strike; and when these are in harmonious adjustment success is assured and vic-

tories are won. With a keen perception of this relationship McClellan selected, with rare discernment, his chiefs of the various staff departments from the small number of educated officers that were then available, and in this he was aided by the hearty co-operation of the Administration. To relieve himself of many details connected with the administration of the army and to supervise the various staff departments, he saw the necessity of a chief of staff, an office hitherto unknown to our service, and which demanded of the incumbent the most delicate and confidential personal and official relations with the commander of the army. It was therefore quite natural that his choice for this position should fall upon his old commander in the Red River Exploring Expedition, Colonel Randolph B. Marcy, who had recently become his father-in-law. That adverse criticism should attend this selection on the ground of relationship was to be expected, but it does not appear that McClellan ever regretted his choice or was conscious of committing an error in this selection. Nevertheless it was a weak spot in his armor, for it was not by any means conceded by those in a position to know, that Marcy was gifted with those rare and varied attainments that such an officer should possess so as to particularly distinguish him for selection to this office. He certainly did not belong to the same class with Berthier, Napoleon's admirable chief of staff.

In the meanwhile the new levies of infantry were rapidly arriving in Washington and being formed into provisional brigades in camps on the Maryland side of the river for equipment, instruction, and discipline. This duty was first intrusted to General Fitz-John Porter, then to General Burnside, and finally to General Silas Casey, an able drill master, who was peculiarly adapted to work of this nature. The new artillery troops reported to General Barry, chief of artillery, and the cavalry to the chief of cavalry, General Stoneman, and when the new troops were sufficiently instructed under these able officers they were transferred across

the Potomac and assigned to the brigades serving there. And now, under the inspiring influence of McClellan's directing mind and vigorous personal activity, the morale of the troops visibly improved; officers and men tried to do their best to make ready for the day of inspection, and to be found worthy of commendation; and to develop and maintain an *esprit de corps* among them, McClellan succeeded in having his command called "The Army of the Potomac."

This period of preparation and development needed just such a man as McClellan, and the fortuitous concurrence of time and circumstance to evolve that great Army of the Potomac from the heterogeneous elements that were then coming from every part of the North. Whatever may be the judgment of history in regard to the merits of McClellan in the domain of grand tactics and strategy, there is no question about his ability in organization. Having a clear perception of the framework of his contemplated structure, he possessed all those characteristics of mind and manner which compelled the active support of the powerful to supply the means, and brought out the reciprocal love and affection of his troops to vivify the structure with the spirit of devotion to the country. All honor, then, to him who implanted in the grand old Army of the Potomac during its infancy such ideals of discipline, devotion, and duty, that throughout all the trying years of its existence it never lost its spirit nor faltered in its purpose.

McClellan's life at this time was a very busy one. He devoted the greater portion of the day to riding the lines of his army in order to see for himself the location, distribution, and character of the troops, and was frequently from twelve to fourteen hours in the saddle at a time. In the early morning and late at night he was engaged upon the necessary details that demanded immediate attention; in granting audiences to officials of every degree from the highest to the lowest, for he had now become a power among the power-

ful in the land. The excessive mental and physical labor that his exalted and prominent position demanded of him was sufficient to break down the most vigorous of men; and although he possessed unusual stamina, he could not escape the consequences of the unceasing drafts of vitality upon his constitution, especially since he paid but little attention to regularity in his physical demands for rest and refreshment. The effects of these overdrafts upon the capital stock of his vitality are visible in the morbidness that is sometimes exhibited in his home letters, and especially at the times when his bodily and mental fatigue happen to be more than ordinarily excessive. At such times he is cast down in spirit, fears that the task set for him to accomplish is too great, says harsh things about the general in chief, the President, the Cabinet, and politicians in general; but as all these things are said in home letters written in utter weariness of both mind and body, they ought not to be given undue weight in arriving at a just estimate of the man. It would have been a comparatively easy problem for any one having a talent for organization to do what McClellan was obliged to do, provided he was furnished with all the appliances: such as an efficient and experienced staff; competent regimental, brigade, and division commanders, who had themselves passed through the subaltern grades; arms and munitions trustworthy and ready; food and forage; transportation, and the thousand and one other things that are requisite to make the army an efficient fighting machine. But when all these things have to be created *ab initio*, with manifest incompetency everywhere, then does the task become one that but few can successfully undertake; and therefore, in view of McClellan's magnificent success, he deserves the undying thanks of the nation, as he has earned the love and affection of his soldiers.

He very early saw the absolute necessity of securing Washington by a system of artificial defenses, since its security was of the very first importance in the pres-

ent war, and he therefore committed this problem to his talented chief engineer, General Barnard. Upon this question the latter, in justification of the elaborate plan adopted for these defenses, says: "In a war of the nation—united and patriotic—with a foreign power, conquest by the enemy of the seat of government, though it might be a disgrace, would have little influence upon the issues of the contest. In the recent civil war, on the contrary, the rebel flag flying from the dome of the Capitol would have been the signal of recognition by those foreign powers whose open influence and active agency would be too willingly thrown, with whatever plausible pretext, into the scale of dismemberment to become almost decisive of the event. That the preservation of the national cause should have been thus identified with the continuous tenure of a city situated as is Washington, upon the very boundary of the most powerful and energetic of the rebellious States, and surrounded by the territory of another State only restrained from open rebellion by the heavy pressure of armed force, was one of the chief embarrassments of the Government in the prosecution of the war. A point so vital and yet so vulnerable furnished to the enemy ready means of relieving himself, through demonstrations more or less serious, from dangerous pressure, while excessive anxiety for its safety partially paralyzed most of our own operations on this theater." *

The rules and regulations for the government of the army, as well as the customs of service, have provided certain well-known means for the transaction of business and the preservation of military subordination. In this country the President is the commander in chief of the army and navy, and therefore the head of the military hierarchy. He controls the army, as part of the executive branch of the Government, through the War Department, of which the Secretary of War is the responsible head. He may also designate an offi-

* Barnard's Defenses of Washington, p. 5.

cer, usually the senior in rank, to command the army, but who, nevertheless, is always under the orders of the War Department. Hence the control which a general in chief may exercise in purely military matters, such as the movement and concentration of troops, assignment of officers to special commands, and similar matters connected with its *personnel*, subject as this control is to the discretion of the Secretary of War and not fixed by law, has widely varied from time to time. The effect upon the whole has been to minimize the authority of the general in chief within the limits of his legitimate command, and to strengthen the influence of those chiefs of bureaus who, being in daily contact with the Secretary of War, can seize the opportune moment to strengthen their own power. The position of general in chief, while one of dignity and honor, is not always one of personal military control even when the incumbent is an experienced soldier of the highest distinction.

Shortly after McClellan assumed command of the Division of the Potomac his relations with General Scott, the veteran commander of the army, became strained, and their separation widened day by day. The latter had not been infected with the prevailing demoralization attending the disaster of Bull Run, and had no fears for the immediate safety of Washington. However, he had acquiesced in the order of the War Department which brought McClellan to Washington, although earlier on the same day he had directed him to remain with his command in West Virginia instead of moving into the Shenandoah Valley, which McClellan had suggested as a proper movement to relieve the existing situation. He therefore welcomed him with marked appreciation, but expected from him that deference and subordination to which he was accustomed. The aged veteran, then in his seventy-sixth year, was physically unfit to command the army. He had borne with unflinching courage the severest bodily and mental strain through all the gloomy days when the foundations of our national existence seemed to be threat-

ened with destruction. He was often betrayed by his physical condition into irascibility of temper, was dogmatic in assertion, and could ill brook any neglect of those courtesies which were due to his official position on the part of his subordinates; but much could be forgiven to the glorious old veteran of two wars, whose sterling loyalty was in striking contrast to the conduct of many younger officers of the army. McClellan was, however, very soon placed in an exceedingly embarrassing situation. It was early made apparent to him that the Administration relied upon his ability and efforts to improve the condition of things, which, in its opinion, could scarcely be much worse. His exalted reputation as a successful general, his manly bearing, cool composure, manifest intelligence, and sturdy figure made the deepest impression upon every one, relieved the prevailing apprehension, and implanted the germs of confidence in the minds of all. He became at once the central military figure. Wherever he went he was the object of admiration. The adulation to which he was subjected, the deference shown him by the President and Cabinet ministers, and the eagerness of senators and representatives to meet his wishes by legislation, could scarcely fail to disturb his balance and turn his head, self-reliant as he was. All this was gall and bitterness to the commanding general of the army, who felt that he was being passed by for a general forty years his junior in age and experience. He resented the conferences McClellan had with the President and members of the Cabinet, although assured that they were unsought.

These conferences really grew out of the great anxiety that consumed the President at that critical time, and who sought information and support from the most direct source without concerning himself about the usual military etiquette. Certain correspondence, which began less than a fortnight after McClellan had assumed command, showing not only the immediate points upon which these two eminent soldiers differed, but the first expression of McClellan's over-

estimate of the enemy opposed to him, is sufficiently characteristic to warrant insertion.

HEADQUARTERS DIVISION OF THE POTOMAC,
WASHINGTON, *August* 8, 1861.

Lieut.-Gen. WINFIELD SCOTT, *Commanding U. S. Army.*

GENERAL: Information from various sources reaching me to-day, through spies, letters, and telegrams, confirms my impressions, derived from previous advices, that the enemy intend attacking our positions on the other side of the river, as well as to cross the Potomac north of us. I have also received a telegram from a reliable agent just from Knoxville, Tenn., that large re-enforcements are still passing through there to Richmond. I am induced to believe that the enemy has at least one hundred thousand men in front of us.

Were I in Beauregard's place, with that force at my disposal, I would attack the positions on the other side of the Potomac, and at the same time cross the river above this city in force. I feel confident that our present army in this vicinity is entirely insufficient for the emergency, and it is deficient in all the arms of the service—infantry, artillery, and cavalry. I therefore respectfully and most earnestly urge that the garrisons of all places in our rear be reduced at once to the minimum absolutely necessary to hold them, and that all the troops thus made available be forthwith forwarded to this city; that every company of regular artillery within reach be immediately ordered here to be mounted; that every possible means be used to expedite the forwarding of new regiments of volunteers to this capital without one hour's delay. I urge that nothing be left undone to bring up our force for the defense of this city to one hundred thousand men before attending to any other point. I advise that at least eight or ten good Ohio and Indiana regiments may be telegraphed for from Western Virginia, their places to be filled at once by the new troops from the same States, who will be at least reliable to fight behind the intrenchments which have been constructed there.

The vital importance of rendering Washington at once perfectly secure and its imminent danger impel me to urge these requests with the utmost earnestness, and that not an hour be lost in carrying them into execution.

A sense of duty which I can not resist compels me to state that, in my opinion, military necessity demands that the Departments of Northeastern Virginia, Washington, the Shenandoah, Pennsylvania, including Baltimore and the one including Fort Monroe, should be merged into one depart-

ment, under the immediate control of the commander of the main army of operations, and which should be known and designated as such.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEO. B. McCLELLAN, *Major General Commanding.**

This letter elicited from General Scott the following:

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
WASHINGTON, *August* 9, 1861.

To the Hon. the Secretary of War:

SIR: I received yesterday from Major-General McClellan a letter of that date, to which I design this as my only reply.

Had Major-General McClellan presented the same views in person, they would have been freely entertained and discussed. All my military views and opinions had been so presented to him, without eliciting much remark in our few meetings, which I have in vain sought to multiply. He has stood on his guard, and now places himself on record. Let him make the most of his unenvied advantages.

Major-General McClellan has propagated in high quarters the idea expressed in the letter before me, that Washington was not only "insecure," but in "imminent danger."

Relying on our numbers, our forts, and the Potomac River, I am confident in the opposite opinion; and considering the stream of new regiments that is pouring in upon us (before this alarm could have reached their homes), I have not the slightest apprehension for the safety of the Government here.

Having now been long unable to mount a horse, or to walk more than a few paces at a time, and consequently being unable to review troops, much less to direct them in battle—in short, being broken down by many particular hurts, besides the general infirmities of age—I feel that I have become an incumbrance to the army as well as to myself, and that I ought, giving way to a younger commander, to seek the palliatives of physical pain and exhaustion.

Accordingly, I must beg the President, at the earliest moment, to allow me to be placed on the officers' retired list, and then quietly to lay myself up—probably forever—somewhere in or about New York. But, wherever I may spend my little remainder of life, my frequent and latest prayer will be, "God save the Union!"

I have the honor to be, sir, with high respect, your obedient servant,

WINFIELD SCOTT.†

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* Official War Records, vol. xi, pt. 3, p. 3. † Ibid. p. 4.

This difference between the lieutenant general and the commander of the active army was of too grave a character to be quietly ignored, and the President undertook to smooth away all resentful feeling. Accordingly he prevailed upon McClellan to withdraw his letter to Scott, and requested Scott to withdraw his to the Secretary of War. This brought out the following letters from the participants, which become of great interest in view of the events that followed:

WASHINGTON, *August* 10, 1861.

His Excellency the President:

SIR: The letter addressed by me under date of the 8th instant to Lieutenant-General Scott, commanding the United States Army, was designed to be a plain and respectful expression of my views of the measures demanded for the safety of the Government in the imminent peril that besets it at the present hour. Every moment's reflection and every fact transpiring convinced me of the urgent necessity of the measures there indicated, and I felt it my duty to him and to the country to communicate them frankly. It is therefore with great pain that I have learned from you this morning that my views do not meet with the approbation of the lieutenant general, and that my letter is unfavorably regarded by him.

The command with which I am intrusted was not sought by me, and has only been accepted from an earnest and humble desire to serve my country in the moment of most extreme peril. With these views I am willing to do and suffer whatever may be required for that service. Nothing could be further from my wishes than to seek any command or urge any measures not required for the exigency of the occasion, and, above all, I would abstain from any conduct that could give offense to General Scott or embarrass the President or any department of the Government. Influenced by these considerations, I yield to your request and withdraw the letter referred to.

The Government and my superior officer being apprised of what I consider to be necessary and proper for the defense of the national capital, I shall strive faithfully and zealously to employ the means that may be placed in my power for that purpose, dismissing every personal feeling or consideration, and praying only the blessing of Divine Providence on my efforts.

I will only add that, as you requested my authority to

withdraw the letter, that authority is hereby given, with the most profound assurance for General Scott and yourself.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEO. B. McCLELLAN.*

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
WASHINGTON, *August* 12, 1861.

The Hon. the Secretary of War:

SIR: On the 10th instant I was kindly requested by the President to withdraw my letter to you of the 9th, in reply to one I had received from Major-General McClellan of the day before; the President, at the same time, showing me a letter to him from General McClellan, in which, at the instance of the President, he offered to withdraw the original letter on which I had animadverted.

While the President was yet with me on that occasion a servant handed me a letter, which proved to be an unauthenticated copy, under a blank cover, of the same letter from General McC. to the President. This slight was not without its influence on my mind.

The President's visit, however, was for the patriotic purpose of healing differences, and so much did I honor his motive that I deemed it due to him to hold his proposition under consideration for some little time.

I deeply regret that, notwithstanding my respect for the opinions and wishes of the President, I can not withdraw the letter in question, for the following reasons :

1. The original offense given to me by Major-General McClellan (see his letter of the 8th instant) seems to have been the result of deliberation between him and some members of the Cabinet, by whom all the greater war questions are to be settled, without resort to or consultation with me, the nominal general in chief of the army. In further proof of this neglect—although it is unofficially known that in the last week (or six days) many regiments have arrived and others have changed their positions, some to a considerable distance—not one of these movements has been reported to me (or anything else) by Major-General McClellan ; while it is believed, and I may add known, that he is in frequent communication with portions of the Cabinet and on matters appertaining to me. That freedom of access and consultation have, very naturally, deluded the junior general into a feeling of indifference toward his senior.

2. With such supports on his part, it would be as idle for me as it would be against the dignity of my years, to be filing daily complaints against an ambitious junior, who, independ-

* Official War Records, vol. xi, pt. 3, p. 4.

ent of the extrinsic advantages alluded to, has unquestionably very high qualifications for military command. I trust they may achieve crowning victories in behalf of the Union.

3. I have in my letter to you of the 9th instant already said enough on the—to others—disgusting subject of my many physical infirmities. I will here add only that, borne down as I am by them, I should unavoidably be in the way at headquarters, even if my abilities for war were now greater than when I was young.

I have the honor to be, sir, with high respect, your most obedient servant, WINFIELD SCOTT.*

With regard to their difference of views upon the proper organization McClellan says: † "A few days after reaching Washington General Scott asked me what I intended to do in the way of organization. I replied that I wished the force under my command to be organized as and denominated an army instead of a geographical division; that I should first form brigades, then divisions, and, when in the field, army corps. My reason for postponing the latter was that with untried general officers it would be too dangerous an experiment to appoint any to such high and important commands without first proving them in actual campaign and in battle.

"He objected to all I proposed, save the brigade formation, saying that under our system and regulations it would be impossible to administer the affairs of an army, and that the retention of the system and nomenclature of geographical divisions and departments was an absolute necessity; he also objected to the formation of divisions as unnecessary, for the reason that in Mexico he had only brigades.

"I called to his attention the fact that, all the world over, fighting forces were organized as armies; that I had done so in West Virginia; and that his force in Mexico was a very small affair in comparison with that soon to be collected in front of Washington. He did not change his views. So I quietly went to work

* Official War Records, vol. xi, pt. 3, p. 4.
† McClellan's Own Story, p. 113.

in my own way. The result was that on the 20th of August the order constituting the Army of the Potomac was issued; and in addition to the two departments originally under my command, the troops in the Shenandoah, Maryland, and Delaware were also included in the Army of the Potomac, the old departments being broken up and merged in the newly created army. Thus I had command of all the troops on the line of the Potomac, and as far to the rear as Baltimore and Fort Delaware."

In view of these serious differences and the impossibility of reconciling them, General Scott's application for retirement of August 9th should have received the approval of the President. He was practically relieved from responsibility from the very moment McClellan was assigned to command the Army of the Potomac, and the latter's expectation of complete support of the Administration was entitled to the amplest justification. But instead of this the *status quo* was maintained, and the irritation on the one hand and increasing embarrassment on the other resulted, until Scott could no longer remain silent, and submitted the following vigorous communication * to the Secretary of War:

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
WASHINGTON, *October* 4, 1861.

Hon. S. CAMERON, *Secretary of War:*

SIR: You are, I believe, aware that I hailed the arrival here of Major-General McClellan as an event of happy consequence to the country and to the army. Indeed, if I did not call for him, I heartily approved of the suggestion, and gave it the most cordial support. He, however, had hardly entered upon his new duties, when, encouraged to communicate directly with the President and certain members of the Cabinet, he in a few days forgot that he had any intermediate commander, and has now long prided himself in treating me with uniform neglect, running into disobedience of orders of the smaller matters—neglects, though, in themselves, grave military offenses. I read and speak in the face of the following facts:

* Official War Records, vol. cvii, p. 491 *et. seq.*

First. To suppress irregularity, more conspicuous in Major-General McClellan than in any other officer, I publish the following facts:

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
WASHINGTON, *September* 16, 1861.

General Orders, No. 17.

There are irregularities in the correspondence of the army which need prompt correction. It is highly important that junior officers on duty be not permitted to correspond with the general in chief, or other commander, on current official business, except through intermediate commanders; and the same rule applies to correspondence with the President direct, or with him through the Secretary of War, unless it be by the special invitation or request of the President.

By command of Lieutenant-General Scott,
E. D. TOWNSEND, *Assistant Adjutant General.*

With this order fresh in his memory, Major-General McClellan addressed two important communications to the Secretary of War, on respectively the 19th and 20th of the same month, over my head, and how many since to the Secretary, and even to the President direct, I have not inquired, but many, I have no doubt, besides daily oral communications with the same high functionaries—all without my knowledge.

Second. To correct another class of grave neglects, I the same day caused to be addressed to Major-General McClellan the following order:

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
WASHINGTON, *September* 16, 1861.

The commanding general of the Army of the Potomac will cause the position, state, and number of troops under him to be reported at once to general headquarters, by divisions, brigades, and independent regiments or detachments, which general report will be followed by reports of new troops as they arrive, with the dispositions made of them, together with all the material changes which may take place in said army.

By command of Lieutenant-General Scott,
E. D. TOWNSEND, *Assistant Adjutant General.*

Eighteen days have now elapsed, and not the slightest response has been shown to either of these orders by Major-General McClellan. Perhaps he will say, in respect to the latter, it has been difficult for him to procure the exact returns of divisions and brigades. But why not have given me proximate returns, such as he so eagerly furnished the

President and certain secretaries? Has, then, a senior no corrective power over a junior officer in case of such persistent neglect and disobedience?

The remedy by arrest and trial before a court-martial would probably soon cure the evil. But it has been feared that a conflict of authority near the head of the army would be highly encouraging to the enemies and depressing to the friends of the Union. Hence my long forbearance; and continuing, though but nominally, on duty, I shall try to hold out till the arrival of Major-General Halleck, when, as his presence will give me increased confidence in the safety of the Union—and being, as I am, unable to ride in the saddle, or to walk, by reason of dropsy in my feet and legs and paralysis in the small of my back—I shall definitely retire from command of the army.

I have the honor to remain, with high respect, your most obedient servant, WINFIELD SCOTT.*

On November 1st General Scott was retired, and McClellan succeeded him by direction of the President. Upon assuming command of the army the same day, General McClellan, in General Orders, No. 19, pays a graceful and just tribute to the retiring veteran, which did much to heal his wounded spirit. In this he says:

"The army will unite with me in the feeling of regret that the weight of many years, and the effect of increasing infirmities, contracted and intensified in his country's service, should just now remove from our head the greatest soldier of our nation—the hero who in his youth raised high the reputation of his country on the fields of Canada, which he hallowed with his blood; who in more mature years proved to the world that American skill and valor could repeat, if not eclipse, the exploits of Cortez in the land of the Montezumas; whose life has been devoted to the service of his country; whose whole efforts have been directed to uphold our honor at the smallest sacrifice of life—a warrior who scorned the selfish glories of the battlefield when his great abilities as a statesman could be employed more profitably for his country; a citizen who in his declining years has given to the world the most shining instance of loyalty in disregarding all ties of birth, and clinging still to the cause

of truth and honor. Such has been the career, such the character, of Winfield Scott, whom it has long been the delight of the nation to honor, both as a man and a soldier. While we regret his loss, there is one thing we can not regret—the bright example he has left for our emulation. Let us all hope and pray that his declining years may be passed in peace and happiness, and that they may be cheered by the success of the country and the cause he has fought for and loved so well. Beyond all that, let us do nothing that can cause him to blush for us; let no defeat of the army he has so long commanded embitter his last years, but let our victories illuminate the close of a life so grand." *

From the foregoing exhibit it is manifest that the actual responsibility was placed upon McClellan by the informal methods of procedure adopted by the President, and while Scott, so long as he was general in chief, could do no more than make ineffectual protests, the Government was aiding McClellan to the full extent of its power. That he felt that this responsibility was solely his own, is made evident in his home letters, which also display his irritation against General Scott, whose position hampered him, and even against the President, who could not see the condition of affairs as McClellan saw it. His anxiety lest the enemy should make an aggressive movement before he was ready to resist it, while it might be justified by the inexperience of his new troops and the incomplete state of the defenses, was aggravated by the mental worry engendered by the controversies referred to above. Firmly impressed with the conviction that the enemy were in great strength in his front and would speedily attack him, every day that he failed to do so was a day of respite for which he was duly thankful. Thus he says, August 18th: † "If Beauregard does not attack within two days he has lost every chance of success."

* Official War Records, Series III, vol. i, p. 614.
† McClellan's Own Story, p. 88.

On the 25th: * "Friend Beauregard has allowed the chance to escape him. I have now some sixty-five thousand effective men; will have seventy-five thousand by the end of week. Last week he certainly had double our force. I feel sure that the dangerous moment has passed." And September 6th: † "I feel now perfectly sure against an attack; the next thing will be to attack him." Again Secretary of War Cameron, sharing McClellan's apprehensions, writes him, September 7th: ‡ "General: It is evident that we are on the eve of a great battle—one that may decide the fate of the country. Its success must depend on you and the means that may be placed at your disposal. Impressed with this belief, and anxious to aid you with all the power of my department, I will be glad if you will inform me how I can do so."

To which McClellan replied:

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,
WASHINGTON, *September* 8, 1861.

Hon. SIMON CAMERON, *Secretary of War:*

SIR: Your note of yesterday is received. I concur in your views as to the exigency of the present occasion. I appreciate and cordially thank you for your offers of support, and will avail myself of them to the fullest extent demanded by the interests of the country. The force of all our arms within the immediate vicinity of Washington is nearly eighty-five thousand men. The effective portion of this force is more than sufficient to resist with certain success any attack on our works upon the other side of the river. By calling in the commands of Generals Banks and Stone, it will probably be sufficient to defend the city of Washington from whatever direction it may be assailed. It is well understood that, although the ultimate design of the enemy is to possess himself of the city of Washington, his first efforts will be directed toward Baltimore, with the intention of cutting our lines of communication and supplies, as well as to arouse an insurrection in Maryland. To accomplish this he will no doubt show a certain portion of his force in front of our positions on the other side of the Potomac, in order to engage our attention there and induce us to leave a large portion of our force for the defense of those positions. He will probably also make demonstrations in

* McClellan's Own Story, p. 89. † Ibid., p. 90. ‡ Ibid., p. 105.

the vicinity of Aquia Creek, Mathias Point, and the Occoquan, in order still further to induce us to disseminate our forces. His main and real movement will doubtless be to cross the Potomac between Washington and Point of Rocks, probably not far from Seneca Mills, and most likely at more points than one. His hope will be so to engage our attention by the diversions already named as to enable him to move with a larger force direct and unopposed on Baltimore. I see no reason to doubt the possibility of his attempting this with a column of at least one hundred thousand effective troops. If he has only one hundred and thirty thousand under arms, he can make all the diversions I have mentioned with his raw and badly organized troops, leaving one hundred thousand effective men for his real movement. As I am now situated I can by no possibility bring to bear against this column more than seventy thousand, and probably not over sixty thousand, effective troops.

In regard to the composition of our active army, it must be borne in mind that the very important arms of cavalry and artillery had been almost entirely neglected until I assumed command of this army, and that consequently the troops of these arms, although greatly increased in numbers, are comparatively raw and inexperienced, most of the cavalry not being yet armed or equipped.

In making the foregoing estimate of numbers I have reduced the enemy's force below what is regarded by the War Department and other official circles as its real strength, and have taken the reverse course as to our own. Our situation, then, is simply this: If the commander in chief of the enemy follows the simplest dictates of the military art, we must meet him with greatly inferior forces. To render success possible, the divisions of our army must be more ably led and commanded than those of the enemy. The fate of the nation and the success of the cause in which we are engaged must be mainly decided by the issue of the next battle to be fought by the army now under my command. I therefore feel that the interests of the nation demand that the ablest soldiers in the service should be on duty with the Army of the Potomac, and that, contenting ourselves with remaining on the defensive for the present at all other points, this army should at once be re-enforced by all the effective troops that the East and West and North can furnish.

To insure present success, the portion of this army available for active operations should be at least equal to any force which it may be called to encounter. To accomplish this, it is necessary that it should be at once very largely re-enforced. For ulterior results and to bring this war to a speedy close, it will be necessary that our active army shall be much superior to the enemy in numbers, so as to make

it reasonably certain that we shall win every battle which we fight, and at the same time be able to cover our communications as we advance.

I would also urgently recommend that the whole of the regular army, old and new, be at once ordered to report here, excepting the mounted batteries actually serving in other departments, and the minimum numbers of companies of artillery actually necessary to form the nucleus of the garrisons of our most important permanent works. There should be no delay in carrying out this measure. Scattered as the regulars now are, they are nowhere strong enough to produce a marked effect. United in one body they will insure the success of this army.

In organizing the Army of the Potomac I have selected general and staff officers with distinct reference to their fitness for the important duties that may devolve upon them. Any change or disposition of such officers without consulting the commanding general may fatally impair the efficiency of this army and the success of its operations. I therefore earnestly request that in future every general officer appointed upon my recommendation shall be assigned to this army; that I shall have full control of the officers and troops in this department, and that no orders shall be given respecting my command without my being first consulted. It is evident that I can not otherwise be responsible for the success of our arms. In this connection I respectfully insist that Brigadier-Generals Don Carlos Buell and J. F. Reynolds, both appointed upon my recommendation and for the purpose of serving with me, be at once so assigned. In obedience to your request I have thus frankly stated in what manner you can at present aid me in the performance of the great duty committed to my charge, and I shall continue to communicate with you in the same spirit.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEO. B. MCCLELLAN, *Major General Commanding.**

This remarkable communication, submitted only six weeks after he had assumed command, exhibits the conclusions which he had arrived at with regard to the strength and purposes of the Confederate forces in his front, his inadequate means of resistance, and his appeal for the complete control of his army. With respect to the first of these he was greatly in error, as a brief reference to the state of affairs on the Confederate side will show.

* Official War Records, vol. v, p. 587. See also McClellan's Own Story, p. 106.

CHAPTER VI.

PLANS OF CAMPAIGNS.—BALL'S BLUFF.

The victory of the Confederates at Manassas gave them unbounded confidence in their military superiority, and was regarded throughout the South as the sure harbinger of ultimate success; and had they known with certainty of the demoralized condition of the Union forces, and been able to make a prompt movement forward, it is very possible that Washington would have been in danger of capture. With many commands overcome by the unaccustomed fatigue of battle and the severe trials of the day, disorganized by their heavy loss in killed and wounded, and somewhat demoralized by their unexpected victory at the close of the action, they were in no condition to gather the legitimate fruits of this, their greatest, opportunity. Within a few days Fairfax Court House was occupied by the Confederate cavalry, and the main body occupied a line from Union Mills on Bull Run to Centreville. About the 10th of August Evans's brigade occupied Leesburg as an outpost, while the main body was advanced to the line from Flint Hill through Fairfax Court House, Fairfax Station to Mitchell's Ford covering Centreville, with the cavalry under Colonel J. E. B. Stuart in close touch with the Union forces on the front and flanks. Upton's, Munson's, and Mason's Hills were speedily occupied as advance posts by the Confederates, giving them the advantage of favorable points of observation on the Union army and of communication by signal with their spies in Washington. This disposition of the Confederate army confined McClellan's forces to a narrow strip bordering the Vir-

ginia side of the Potomac from Alexandria to the Chain bridge, and, besides being a bold menace to their safety, enabled the Confederates to draw supplies from the fertile valley of the Shenandoah and the intervening territory. This bold push forward and the threatening attitude of the enemy deceived McClellan in regard to their actual strength and intended purpose. But General Johnston was not unmindful of his own danger from an attack on his flanks, becoming more possible every day with the increasing strength and improved discipline of the Union army, and believing that his outposts were too far advanced, he withdrew them to Mason's and Munson's Hills about the last of September. In the meantime he had selected the line of the Rappahannock as a defensive line in case he should be forced back, and had prepared it for defense by his engineers to meet such a contingency. The right flank of the Confederate army under Major-General Holmes covered the line of the Occoquan, and he had erected batteries at Evanston to close the Potomac as a line of supply to the Union forces. On the 19th of October the Confederate army was withdrawn from its advanced position at Fairfax Court House to Centreville, which position was strongly fortified and formed a salient whose flanks, resting on Bull Run at Union Mills on the right and along the Warrenton turnpike on the left, were securely protected from a turning movement by a proper disposition of their forces. The strength of the Confederate army at the end of October is given by General Johnston as forty-one thousand of all arms capable of going into battle, which he calls the effective total, but which does not represent the total present for duty. These were distributed as follows: Twenty-seven thousand infantry and artillery at and in front of Centreville, twenty-two hundred at Manassas Junction, sixty-seven hundred between Dumfries and the Occoquan, and twenty-seven hundred at Leesburg. This was far from the estimate made by McClellan in his letter of September 8th, and there is no evidence that it had been dimin-

ished in the meantime, but rather the contrary was true.

With respect to the purpose that the Confederate leaders had in view after the battle of Manassas, and why it was not carried into effect, these were the subjects of a conference held at Fairfax Court House between President Davis and Generals Johnston, Beauregard, and G. W. Smith about the last of September, 1861. On January 31, 1862, General Smith submitted his written recollections of this conference to his associates, Generals Johnston and Beauregard, who likewise signed them, fully agreeing in General Smith's statement as a correct record of the conference. This paper, taken in connection with McClellan's letter of September 8th, is of sufficient importance to warrant its insertion here:*

"On the 26th of September, 1861, General Joseph E. Johnston addressed a letter to the Secretary of War in regard to the importance of putting this army in condition to assume the offensive, and suggested that his Excellency the President, or the Secretary of War, or some one representing them, should at an early day come to the headquarters of the army, then at or near Fairfax Court House, for the purpose of deciding whether the army could be re-enforced to the extent that the commanding general deemed necessary for an offensive campaign.

"His Excellency the President arrived at Fairfax Court House a few days thereafter, late in the afternoon, and proceeded to the quarters of General Beauregard.

"On the same evening General Johnston and I called to pay our respects. No official subjects of importance were alluded to in that interview. At eight o'clock the next evening, by appointment of the President, a conference was had between himself, General Johnston, General Beauregard, and myself. Various matters of detail were introduced by the President, and

* Confederate War Papers, G. W. Smith, p. 14.

talked over between himself and the two senior generals. Finally, with perhaps some abruptness, I said, 'Mr. President, is it not possible to put this army in condition to assume the active offensive?' adding, that this was a question of vital importance, upon which the success or failure of our cause might depend. This question brought on discussion. The precise conversation which followed I do not propose to give; it was not an argument; there seemed to be little difference of opinion between us in regard to general views and principles. It was clearly stated, and agreed to, that the military force of the Confederate States was at the highest point it could attain without arms from abroad; that the portion of this particular army present for duty was in the finest fighting condition; that, if kept inactive, it must retrograde immensely in every respect during the winter, the effect of which was foreseen and dreaded by us all. The enemy were daily increasing in numbers, arms, discipline, and efficiency; we looked forward to a sad state of things at the opening of a spring campaign. These and other points being agreed upon without argument, it was again asked, 'Mr. President, is it not possible to increase the effective strength of this army, and put us in condition to cross the Potomac and carry the war into the enemy's country? Can you not, by stripping other points to the last they will bear, and even risking defeat at all other places, put us in condition to move forward? Success here at this time saves everything, defeat here loses all.' In explanation, and as an illustration of this, the unqualified opinion was advanced that if, for want of adequate strength on our part in Kentucky, the Federal forces should take military possession of that whole State, and even enter and occupy a portion of Tennessee, a victory gained by this army beyond the Potomac would, by threatening the heart of the Northern States, compel their armies to fall back, free Kentucky, and give us the line of the Ohio within ten days thereafter. On the other hand, should our forces in Tennessee and Southern Kentucky be strengthened, so as to enable us

to take and to hold the Ohio River as a boundary, a disastrous defeat of this army would at once be followed by an overwhelming wave of Northern invaders that would sweep over Kentucky and Tennessee, extending to the northern part of the cotton States, if not to New Orleans. Similar views were expressed in regard to ultimate results in northwestern Virginia being dependent upon the success or failure of this army, and various other special illustrations were offered—showing, in short, that success here was success everywhere, defeat here, defeat everywhere, and that this was the point upon which all the available forces of the Confederate States should be concentrated.

"It seemed to be conceded by all that our force at that time here was not sufficient for assuming the offensive beyond the Potomac, and that even with a much larger force an attack upon their army under the guns of their fortifications on this side of the river was out of the question.

"The President asked me what number of men were necessary, in my opinion, to warrant an offensive campaign, to cross the Potomac, cut off the communications of the enemy with their fortified capital, and carry the war into their country. I answered, 'Fifty thousand effective, seasoned soldiers,' explaining that by seasoned soldiers I meant such men as we had here present for duty, and added that they would have to be drawn from the Peninsula, about Yorktown, Norfolk, from Western Virginia, Pensacola, or wherever might be most expedient.

"General Johnston and General Beauregard both said that a force of sixty thousand such men would be necessary, and that this force would require large additional transportation and munitions of war, the supplies here being entirely inadequate for an active campaign in the enemy's country even with our present force. In this connection there was some discussion of the difficulties to be overcome and the probabilities of success, but no one questioned the disastrous results of remaining inactive throughout the winter.

Notwithstanding the belief that many in the Northern army were opposed on principle to invading the Southern States, and that they would fight better in defending their own homes than in attacking ours, it was believed that the best, if not the only, plan to insure success was to concentrate our forces and attack the enemy in their own country. The President, I think, gave no definite opinion in regard to the number of men necessary for that purpose, and I am sure that no one present considered this a question to be finally decided by any other person than the commanding general of the army.

"Returning to the question that had been twice asked, the President expressed surprise and regret that the number of surplus arms here was so small, and, I thought, spoke bitterly of this disappointment. He then stated that at that time no re-enforcements could be furnished to this army of the character asked for, and that the most that could be done would be to furnish recruits to take the surplus arms in store here (say twenty-five hundred stand); that the whole country was demanding protection at his hands and praying for arms and troops for defense. He had long been expecting arms from abroad, but had been disappointed; he still hoped to get them, but had no positive assurance that they would be received at all. The manufacture of arms in the Confederate States was as yet undeveloped to any considerable extent. Want of arms was the great difficulty; he could not take any troops from the points named, and without arms from abroad could not re-enforce this army. He expressed regret, and seemed to feel deeply, as did every one present.

"When the President had thus clearly and positively stated his inability to put this army in the condition deemed by the generals necessary before entering upon an active offensive campaign, it was felt that it might be better to run the risk of almost certain destruction fighting upon the other side of the Potomac, rather than see the gradual dying out and deteri-

oration of this army during a winter at the end of which the term of enlistment of half the force would expire. The prospect of a spring campaign to be commenced under such discouraging circumstances was rendered all the more gloomy by the daily increasing strength of an enemy already more superior in numbers.

"On the other hand was the hope and expectation that before the end of winter arms would be introduced into the country, and all were confident that we could then not only protect our own country, but successfully invade that of the enemy.

"General Johnston said that he did not feel at liberty to express an opinion as to the practicability of reducing the strength of our forces at points not within the limits of his command, and with but few further remarks from any one the answer of the President was accepted as final, and it was felt that there was no other course left but to take a defensive position and await the enemy. If they did not advance, we had but to await the winter and its results.

"After the main question was dropped, the President proposed that, instead of an active offensive campaign, we should attempt certain partial operations—a sudden blow against Sickles or Banks, or to break the bridge over the Monocacy. This, he thought, besides injuring the enemy, would exert a good influence over our troops and encourage the people of the Confederate States generally. In regard to attacking Sickles, it was stated in reply that, as the enemy controlled the river with their ships of war, it would be necessary for us to occupy two points on the river, one above and another below the point of crossing, that we might by our batteries prevent their armed vessels from interfering with the passage of troops. In any case, the difficulty of crossing large bodies over wide rivers in the vicinity of an enemy and then recrossing made such expeditions hazardous. It was agreed, however, that if any opportunity should occur offering reasonable chances of success the attempt would be made.

"During this conference, or council, which lasted perhaps two hours, all was earnest, serious, deliberate; the impression made upon me was deep and lasting, and I am convinced that the foregoing statement is not only correct, as far as it goes, but, in my opinion, it gives a fair idea of all that occurred at the time in regard to the question of our crossing the Potomac."

From this it is evident that McClellan was right in judging that the enemy would probably attack his right and rear in case they should undertake an offensive campaign. He was greatly in error in regard to their effective strength or battle force, for, as Johnston states, it was only forty-one thousand at the end of October, and that it was increased to forty-seven thousand two hundred by the end of November, and to fifty-seven thousand two hundred by the end of December. What were the sources whence McClellan derived his information as to the strength of the enemy? To this we shall now refer.

On the very next day after he had been appointed major general of the Ohio militia he invited Mr. Allan Pinkerton, the well-known detective of Chicago, to meet him for a conference on important matters. He had previously employed Mr. Pinkerton on detective service and entertained a high opinion of his ability. The result of this conference was the establishment of a bureau of secret service under the management of Mr. Pinkerton, composed mainly of the members of the latter's detective force, for the purpose of gathering such information within the lines of the Confederacy as would be of military value. This bureau was transferred to Washington when McClellan was called there, and Mr. Pinkerton, under the cognomen of Major E. J. Allen, remained in control until after the battle of Antietam, reporting the results of his information directly to General McClellan while in the field, and to the provost marshal general and the Secretary of War while in Washington. From this source, then, the highly erroneous and grossly exaggerated estimates of the enemy's strength was derived. It is, in-

deed, difficult to account for the almost absolute reliance which both the Administration and General McClellan placed upon these estimates, now known to have been so untrustworthy. Even Mr. Pinkerton himself, so late as 1883, says:

"Self-constituted critics, whose avenues of information were limited and unreliable, have attempted to prove that the force opposed to General McClellan was much less than was really the case; and upon this hypothesis have been led into unjust and undeserved censure of the commanding general. From my own experience I know to the contrary. My system of obtaining knowledge upon this point was so thorough and complete, my sources of information were so varied, that there could be no serious mistake in the estimates which I then made and reported to General McClellan. From every available field the facts were gleaned. From prisoners of war, contrabands, loyal Southerners, deserters, blockade runners, and from actual observations by trustworthy scouts, my estimates were made, and to-day I affirm as strongly as I did then, that the force opposed to General McClellan before Richmond approximated nearer two hundred thousand men than they did to the numerous estimates of irresponsible historians who have placed the strength of the rebel forces at that time below one hundred thousand men."

Since the publication of the records of the war of the rebellion the actual strength of the Confederate forces is known to a close approximation, and the glaring discrepancy between this and the supposed strength at the time is made manifest. In later years, when the service of information was intrusted to officers of ability who could weigh with judgment information derived from prisoners, deserters, scouts, and other sources, the estimates were much more reliable and correspondingly more valuable. But it is also to be said in this connection that these estimates of Major Allen ought to have been mistrusted by the keen, enlightened judgment of such a soldier as was McClel-

lan. The number of arms in the possession of the South at the breaking out of the rebellion was well known, and the possible additions by importation and manufacture were not difficult to estimate within reasonable probability. Taking this into consideration with respect to what had been accomplished at the North, where with unlimited credit and abundant facilities the Administration had strained every effort to arm and equip the volunteers that offered themselves so generously, it should have been apparent that the Confederate army in Virginia could not possibly have reached the enormous aggregate of one hundred thousand effectives that McClellan had estimated as the strength in front of him as early as September 8th. The fact that he firmly believed it must therefore be taken into consideration in judging of his conduct of affairs during the fall of 1861, when he resisted the enormous pressure brought to bear upon him to make an offensive campaign.

There is, however, another point of sufficient importance to which it is now necessary to refer, and that is the deep-seated convictions, both political and military, that controlled his purposes and guided his actions. First, in regard to his political convictions, he was a Douglas Democrat, but, like other army officers, he had never taken any part in practical politics. He believed that the great object of the war was the restoration of the Union and the preservation of the national life, and did not regard the continued existence of slavery as an obstacle to the accomplishment of these ends. He looked for the restoration of the Union as it was, and therefore held it to be a matter of sound policy to do nothing likely to render ultimate reconciliation and harmony impossible, unless it became a matter of imperative military necessity. He was not in accord with the political views of the Administration, and was decidedly opposed to the aggressive radicals, who, believing slavery the sole cause of the war, demanded an immediate proclamation of freedom to the slaves. McClellan regarded slavery as a

great evil, especially to the whites of the South, but believed that no sweeping measure of emancipation could be carried out, unless accompanied by arrangements providing for new relations between employers and employed, carefully guarding the rights and interests of both; and this difference of opinion and method of procedure soon caused a breach in the friendly regard that had been manifested by some of the strongest of the political leaders in the early days of McClellan's supremacy. A difference in political views paved the way for a distrust of his military ability, especially when there seemed to be an unprecedented delay of the army to advance, and it was not long before the seeds of distrust were sown in a congenial soil for their propagation.

Second, the direction given to the military policy of the Government was mainly fixed, if not entirely controlled, by the predominating influence that McClellan exercised from the time he assumed command of the Army of the Potomac all through the summer and fall of 1861. This policy, outlined in the memorandum * of August 2d, which he submitted to the President at the latter's request, he held with singular tenacity, and it deserves, therefore, a critical examination in order to understand the events that followed. In it he says:

"The object of the present war differs from those in which nations are usually engaged, mainly in this: that the purpose of ordinary war is to conquer a peace and make a treaty on advantageous terms; in this contest it has become necessary to crush a population sufficiently numerous, intelligent, and warlike to constitute a nation. We have not only to defeat their armed and organized forces in the field, but to display such an overwhelming strength as will convince all our antagonists, especially those of the governing, aristocratic class, of the utter impossibility of resistance. Our late reverses make this course imperative. Had

* Official War Records, vol. v, p. 6.

we been successful in the recent battle [Manassas] it is possible that we might have been spared the labor and expense of a great effort; now we have no alternative. Their success will enable the political leaders of the rebels to convince the mass of their people that we are inferior to them in force and courage, and to command all their resources. The contest began with a class, now it is with a people; our military success can alone restore the former issue.

"By thoroughly defeating their armies, taking their strong places, and pursuing a rigidly protective policy as to private property and unarmed persons, and a lenient course as to private soldiers, we may well hope for a permanent restoration of a peaceful Union. But in the first instance the authority of the Government must be supported by overwhelming physical force.

"Our foreign relations and financial credit also imperatively demand that the military action of the Government should be prompt and irresistible.

"The rebels have chosen Virginia as their battlefield, and it seems proper for us to make the first great struggle there. But while thus directing our main efforts, it is necessary to diminish the resistance there offered us by movements on other points both by land and water.

"Without entering at present into details, I would advise that a strong movement be made on the Mississippi, and that the rebels be driven out of Missouri.

"As soon as it becomes perfectly clear that Kentucky is cordially united with us, I would advise a movement through that State into Eastern Tennessee for the purpose of assisting the Union men of that region and of seizing the railroads leading from Memphis to the East.

"The possession of those roads by us, in connection with the movement on the Mississippi, would go far toward determining the evacuation of Virginia by the rebels. In the meantime all the passes into Western Virginia from the East should be securely guarded, but I would advise no movement from that

quarter toward Richmond, unless the political condition of Kentucky renders it impossible or inexpedient for us to make the movement upon Eastern Tennessee through that State. Every effort should, however, be made to organize, equip, and arm as many troops as possible in Western Virginia, in order to render the Ohio and Indiana regiments available for other operations.

"At as early a day as practicable it would be well to protect and reopen the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Baltimore and Fort Monroe should be occupied by garrisons sufficient to retain them in our possession.

"The importance of Harper's Ferry and the line of the Potomac in the direction of Leesburg will be very materially diminished as soon as our force in this vicinity becomes organized, strong, and efficient, because no capable general will cross the river north of this city when we have a strong army here ready to cut off his retreat.

"To revert to the West, it is probable that no very large additions to the troops now in Missouri will be necessary to secure that State.

"I presume that the force required for the movement down the Mississippi will be determined by its commander and the President. If Kentucky assumes the right position, not more than twenty thousand will be needed, together with those that can be raised in that State, and Eastern Tennessee to secure the latter region and its railroads, as well as ultimately to occupy Nashville.

"The Western Virginia troops, with not more than five to ten thousand from Ohio and Indiana, should, under proper management, suffice for its protection.

"When we have reorganized our main army here, ten thousand men ought to be enough to protect the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and the Potomac; five thousand will garrison Baltimore, three thousand Fort Monroe, and not more than twenty thousand will be necessary at the utmost for the defense of Washington.

"For the main army of operations I urge the following composition:

250 regiments of infantry, say.....	225,000	men.
100 field batteries, 600 guns.....	15,000	"
28 regiments cavalry	25,500	"
5 regiments engineer troops.....	7,500	"
Total	273,000	"

"The force must be supplied with the necessary engineer and pontoon trains, and with transportation for everything save tents. Its general line of operations should be so directed that water transportation can be availed of, from point to point, by means of the ocean and the rivers emptying into it. An essential feature of the plan of operations will be the employment of a strong naval force to protect the movements of a fleet of transports intended to convey a considerable body of troops from point to point of the enemy's seacoast, thus either creating diversions and rendering it necessary to detach largely from their main body, in order to protect such of their cities as may be threatened, or else landing and forming establishments on their coasts at any favorable places that opportunity might offer. This naval force should also co-operate with the main army in its efforts to seize the important seaboard towns of the rebels.

"It can not be ignored that the construction of railroads has introduced a new and very important element into war, by the great facilities thus given for concentrating at particular positions large masses of troops from remote sections, and by creating new strategic points and lines of operations.

"It is intended to overcome this difficulty by the partial operations suggested, and by such other as the particular case may require. We must endeavor to seize places on the railways in rear of the enemy's points of concentration, and we must threaten their seaboard cities, in order that each State may be forced, by the necessity of its own defense, to diminish its contingent to the Confederate army.

"The proposed movement down the Mississippi will produce important results in this connection. That advance and the progress of the main army at the East will materially assist each other by diminishing the resistance to be encountered by each.

"The tendency of the Mississippi movement upon all questions connected with cotton is too well understood by the President and Cabinet to need any illustration from me.

"There is another independent movement that has often been suggested and which has always recommended itself to my judgment. I refer to a movement from Kansas and Nebraska through the Indian Territory upon Red River and western Texas, for the purpose of protecting and developing the latent Union and free-State sentiment well known to predominate in western Texas, and which, like a similar sentiment in Western Virginia, will, if protected, ultimately organize that section into a free State. How far it will be possible to support this movement by an advance through New Mexico from California is a matter which I have not sufficiently examined to be able to express a decided opinion. If at all practicable, it is eminently desirable, as bringing into play the resources and warlike qualities of the Pacific States, as well as identifying them with our cause and cementing the bond of union between them and the General Government.

"If it is not departing too far from my province, I will venture to suggest the policy of an ultimate alliance and cordial understanding with Mexico; their sympathies and interests are with us, their antipathies exclusively against our enemies and their institutions. I think it would not be difficult to obtain from the Mexican Government the right to use, at least during the present contest, the road from Guaymas to New Mexico; this concession would very materially reduce the obstacles of the column moving from the Pacific. A similar permission to use their territory for the passage of troops between the Panuco and

the Rio Grande would enable us to throw a column of troops by a good road from Tampico, or some of the small harbors north of it, upon and across the Rio Grande, without risk and scarcely firing a shot.

"To what extent, if any, it would be desirable to take into service and employ Mexican soldiers is a question entirely political, on which I do not venture to offer an opinion.

"The force I have recommended is large, the expense is great. It is possible that a smaller force might accomplish the object in view; but I understand it to be the purpose of this great nation to re-establish the power of its Government and to restore peace to its citizens in the shortest possible time. The question to be decided is simply this: Shall we crush the rebellion at one blow, terminate the war in one campaign, or shall we leave it for a legacy to our descendants?

"When the extent of the possible line of operations is considered, the force asked for for the main army under my command can not be regarded as unduly large; every mile we advance carries us farther from our base of operations and renders detachments necessary to cover our communications, while the enemy will be constantly concentrating as he falls back. I propose, with the force which I have requested, not only to drive the enemy out of Virginia and occupy Richmond, but to occupy Charleston, Savannah, Montgomery, Pensacola, Mobile, and New Orleans; in other words, to move into the heart of the enemy's country and crush the rebellion in its very heart.

"By seizing and repairing the railroads as we advance the difficulties of transportation will be materially diminished. It is perhaps unnecessary to state that, in addition to the forces named in this memorandum, strong reserves should be formed, ready to supply any losses that may occur.

"In conclusion, I would submit that the exigencies of the treasury may be lessened by making only partial payments to our troops while in the enemy's country,

and by giving the obligations of the United States for such supplies as may there be obtained."

It will be remembered that when he submitted this memorandum McClellan was a subordinate commander under the general in chief, a position scarcely justifying him in discussing the general military situation and conduct of the war unless by the direct request of the President. The few days that had elapsed since his advent in Washington could not have sufficed for the preparation of so comprehensive a scheme had he not given considerable study to the general conduct of the war long before he was assigned to his present command, and this exhibits the strategical bent of his mind. Furthermore, it is evident that he foresaw that logically he would soon be called to supersede General Scott as general in chief, and become the military adviser of the President and responsible for the conduct of military operations. Whether he had such assurances from those entitled to give them or not, does not appear, but his conduct with regard to his superior officer can only be accounted for under the supposition that he was directed by competent authority to regard the problem as his own, with the reasonable probability that he would in the near future be charged with its execution. Years afterward, in writing of this plan, he says: "In the light of the experience of the twenty-two years which have elapsed since this memorandum was so hastily prepared, and after full consideration of all the events of the long and bloody war which followed it, I still hold to the soundness of the views it expressed. Had the measures recommended been carried into effect, the war would have been closed in less than one half the time and with infinite saving of blood and treasure. So far as I know, it was the first general plan of operations proposed upon a scale adequate to the case. It recognized the importance of railways as a new element in strategy; it emphasized the vital importance of the railway system leading from Memphis to the East; it marked

out the advantages to be derived from coast expeditions; it stated the part to be played upon the Mississippi; it foreshadowed the marches upon Atlanta and the seacoast; it called for a force which the future proved to be fully within our means, and which would have crushed the rebellion in one or two campaigns." *

Unquestionably, had it been possible, under our system of political responsibility and governmental administration, to organize, equip, train, and discipline such an army within a reasonable time nothing could have withstood its triumphal march from the Potomac to the Gulf under a competent and aggressive leader. "Overwhelming physical force with prompt and irresistible action" would have destroyed the Confederate army in Virginia, disheartened the Western Confederate States, and speedily brought an end to the war. This was the purely theoretical aspect of the problem, but McClellan had then been too short a time in Washington fully to appreciate the almost insuperable obstacles that political considerations would offer to the accomplishment of so comprehensive a scheme. The public mind had not then been educated to accept with patience the time element in the organization of armies. In the eyes of the people a patriot armed with a musket and clothed in uniform was a soldier, a collection of such soldiers an army, and mere excess in numbers a convincing fact of superiority.

Considering the general ignorance existing in the body politic with reference to the necessities and complexities of a sound military system, the forbearance of the people while the Army of the Potomac was in process of formation was both remarkable and commendable. McClellan did not regard the time consumed as unnecessarily long or in any degree wasted. He was striving "to bring about such a condition of discipline and instruction that the army could be

* McClellan's Own Story, p. 105.

handled on the march and on the field of battle and that orders could be carried out." * He held frequent reviews of the several portions of his command "to accustom the regiments to move together and see each other, to give the troops an idea of their own strength, to infuse *esprit de corps* and mutual emulation, and to acquaint myself with the capacity of the general officers." †

Meanwhile the army was growing in strength. Including the command of General Dix at Baltimore, the forces on the Maryland shore of the Potomac from below Washington as far north as Cumberland and the garrisons of Washington and Alexandria, the successive returns show that its numbers were as follows: ‡

Date.	On the rolls.	Sick.	Absent.	In confinement.	Present for duty.	Effective.
Oct. 15th...	152,051	9,290	8,240	1,156	133,201	111,000
Dec. 1st....	198,313	11,470	15,102	2,189	169,452	141,210
Jan. 1st....	220,237	11,707	14,790	2,260	191,480	159,567
Feb. 1st....	222,196	14,110	14,363	2,917	190,806	159,205
March 1st..	221,987	13,570	13,167	2,108	193,142	160,952

The numbers in the last column being derived from those "present for duty" by diminishing them by one sixth, which has been shown in practice to be a general rule; but it also sometimes happens that some of these effectives may temporarily lack equipments. Of course the older regiments, having had a longer training, were generally better disciplined than the more recent arrivals.

In the organization for field service, four regiments constituted a brigade and three brigades a division. The divisions were formed as rapidly as possible, the first being that of McDowell, August 24th; then

* McClellan's Own Story, p. 98.
† Ibid., p. 98.
‡ Official War Records, vol. v, p. 12.

Franklin's, August 28th; Fitz-John Porter's, August 30th; Stone's, September 12th; Buell's, September 14th; McCall's, September 16th; W. F. Smith's, September 28th; Heintzelman's, October 5th; Hooker's, October 11th; Blenker's, October 12th; Sumner's, November 25th; and Casey's, December 6th. Early in November seven of these divisions were posted on the Virginia side of the Potomac so as to cover every avenue of approach to the defensive line, two were placed north of Washington supported by Casey's provisional brigade, Hooker's south of the city in the vicinity of Budd's Ferry, while Banks's forces, also in division organization, were located in the vicinity of Harper's Ferry. These division commanders were, with a single exception, educated soldiers, as were also the majority of the brigade commanders, and their after memorable careers justified McClellan's excellent judgment in selecting them for their earlier commands.

It was not until after the first week of September that McClellan's apprehension of an attack by the enemy had been sufficiently allayed to make him entertain the idea of becoming the aggressor. But day after day passed without any indication of a general movement of the army. A month afterward he says: "Preparations are slow, and I have an infinite deal to do before my army is really ready to fight a great battle. Washington may now be looked upon as quite safe. They can not attack it in front. My flanks are also safe, or soon will be. Then I shall take my own time to make an army that will be sure of success. . . . I do not expect to fight a battle near Washington; probably none will be fought until I advance, and that I will not do until I am fully ready. My plans depend upon circumstances. So soon as I feel that my army is well organized and well disciplined and strong enough, I will advance and force the rebels to a battle in a field of my own selection. A long time must yet elapse before I can do this, and I expect all the newspapers to abuse me for delay; but

I will not mind that." * This letter, written October 6th, is eminently characteristic and in complete accord with his early determination not to fight an indecisive battle. But until the question of General Scott's retirement was settled he was debarred from deciding upon a comprehensive plan, and, in the opinion of his friends and advisers, he felt himself justified in adopting a waiting policy.

But in the meantime, and for long afterward, his service of information was wretchedly inefficient and his knowledge of the enemy's purpose and strength correspondingly erroneous. The only efficient means by which such information can be secured is by strong reconnoissances, and nothing of this kind was undertaken by McClellan's orders. It is true that there were several minor affairs or skirmishes between small detachments not exceeding a few hundred men on each side, in which the advantage remained with the Confederates owing to their greater familiarity with the ground and their better leadership and outpost service. In none of these did the troops move far from their camps, and in none, except those of Dranesville and Lewinsville, was the exposure to fire sufficient to test the behavior of troops in battle or to give them that confidence in themselves and in their commanders which is of essential importance as a preliminary to operations of a more extensive character. But the affair at Ball's Bluff resulted in a serious disaster to the Union forces, and as it was the occasion of much animadversion on the part of Congress and reflected in a measurable degree upon McClellan's reputation, it is necessary to give it some attention.

On the morning of October 20th General McClellan received information from General Banks's headquarters at Darnestown that the enemy had withdrawn from their advanced post at Leesburg. On the previous day General McCall, whose division was stationed on the Virginia side, marched from his camp near

* McClellan's Own Story, p. 168.

Langley to make a close survey and reconnoissance of the country in his front beyond Dranesville, and doubtless McClellan connected the withdrawal of the enemy from Leesburg with this movement of McCall's. He caused to be sent to General Stone, whose headquarters were at Poolesville and hence nearest Leesburg, this dispatch: "General McClellan desires me to inform you that General McCall occupied Dranesville yesterday and is still there. Will send out heavy reconnoissances to-day in all directions from that point. The general desires that you will keep a good lookout upon Leesburg to see if this movement has the effect to drive them away. Perhaps a slight demonstration on your part would have the effect to move them." * Stone, properly interpreting these instructions, made an open display of his troops at Edwards's Ferry as if to make a crossing, and a subsequent movement toward Leesburg. Four miles above, at Harrison's Island and Conrad's Ferry, a small outpost was established consisting of a company of infantry and a section of artillery, and Stone had directed that a small party be sent from the island to the Virginia side to make a reconnoissance toward Leesburg. This party of about twenty men crossed about dusk, and after climbing the bluff moved toward Leesburg without challenge until, mistaking some openings in a grove of maples for an encampment of the enemy, they returned to the island about ten o'clock. Upon receiving the report of this scout, Stone, who was at Edwards's Ferry, directed Colonel Devens to attack the supposed encampment at early dawn with four companies of his regiment, Colonel Lee to protect Devens's retreat with a force of a hundred men posted on the Virginia Bluff near the place of landing. Devens was directed in case of success to return to the Maryland side, unless he should see a position on the Virginia side near the river which he could undoubtedly hold successfully against largely superior numbers until re-enforced;

* Official War Records, vol. v, p. 32.

in such case he was to hold on and report. Devens found, of course, no encampment, but proceeding until he had a full view of Leesburg, and being under cover of the woods and having no reason to suspect that his presence was known to the enemy, determined to hold his position and report his observations to Stone. While waiting the return of his messenger he had a slight skirmish with a small body of the enemy. The messenger, Lieutenant Howe, returned to Devens at about eight o'clock with the information that the remaining five companies of Devens's regiment had been ordered to cross and occupy Smart's Mill, a strong position, and that a detachment of cavalry was ordered to report to Devens for scouting duty to ascertain what was in his front. Lieutenant Howe was directed to return to Stone and report the skirmish, and while on his way he met Colonel Baker returning from an interview with General Stone, and at his request stated the message which he was charged to deliver to Stone. So far everything had been done properly and with excellent judgment.

When Stone had determined to send Devens's little force across the river he gave orders for Baker to send a regiment of his brigade to the vicinity of Conrad's Ferry at daybreak of the 21st, and to hold the rest of his brigade in readiness to move from his encampment. Baker carried out his instructions with commendable promptness, and then rode down to Stone's headquarters to report in person. At this interview Stone explained to Baker the situation and his purposes, and then determined to intrust Baker with the control of affairs at Harrison's Island, as it was too far distant for him to manage from his own headquarters, giving him discretionary power to withdraw the troops already crossed over or to advance more. Baker, after leaving Stone, evidently immediately made up his mind to push over the main portion of his brigade and fight a battle. He assumed command of the right at about ten o'clock in the morning, but instead of proceeding at once to the position

occupied by Devens and studying his ground, wasted his time in the endeavor to provide greater facilities for crossing troops, a matter which properly could have been left to some subaltern officer. It was not till a quarter past two o'clock that he came into personal contact with Colonel Devens, who had been without instructions for over five hours, and with no other information than that Baker was in command. The enemy in the meanwhile had discovered that no real attack was intended from the direction of Edwards's Ferry, and they therefore concentrated their strength at Ball's Bluff. Colonel Baker's dispositions to repel this attack were faulty to a degree. Personally a man of great courage, he was, however, so destitute of military knowledge and ability, and had so neglected every important duty incumbent upon him as commander of the forces, that it may be said that his conduct of affairs invited the disaster that resulted in spite of the fine behavior of his troops engaged. Fighting with their backs to the river bluff in an open field, the tactics of the battle were faulty in the extreme; the left flank was soon turned and the Union troops driven over the bluff into the river, where many were captured. Baker was killed about five o'clock, and thus paid with his own life the penalty of his ignorance and rashness. The Union troops lost forty-nine killed, one hundred and fifty-eight wounded, and seven hundred and fourteen missing, the greater portion of these having been captured, while the Confederates lost in all but one hundred and fifty-five from their four regiments engaged.

This disaster had a widespread influence upon military affairs. At first it was believed that a single brigade of the enemy had held in check a greatly superior force of Union troops at Edwards's Ferry, and operating on interior lines had also overwhelmingly defeated an equal force at Ball's Bluff; as a consequence it was supposed to be demonstrated that the Confederates would always prove superior in valor and tactics, and that the victories of Manassas and

Ball's Bluff were types of what was certain to happen in every conflict. The Confederates were correspondingly elated, while the Union troops were depressed and disheartened. Colonel Baker, who had given up his life upon the field of battle, was regarded as a hero sacrificed to the pusillanimity of General Stone. In addition to this, he was a senator from Oregon, a distinguished orator, a personal friend of the President, a patriot who had made the supreme sacrifice to the cause he loved so well. There could be but one result: Baker became the sacrificed martyr, Stone the dishonored traitor. Shortly after Congress convened in the December following, resolutions were introduced for the appointment of committees to investigate and determine the responsibility for the disaster of Ball's Bluff. This resulted, however, in the creation of a joint committee, consisting of three representatives and two senators, to inquire into the conduct of the war, thus extending very greatly the scope of its investigations. More than three months after the battle Stone was suddenly arrested at midnight, placed in close custody, and confined for one hundred and eighty-nine days, then released without having been granted a trial or any opportunity to meet the accusations which prompted his arrest. It is now known that the testimony brought before the Committee on the Conduct of the War, which, however honestly submitted by the witnesses, was not subjected to the test of cross-examination or examination by the accused officer, satisfactorily established in their minds the proof of his disloyalty, and the Secretary of War ordered his arrest. General McClellan held the order for eleven days before executing it, but in a letter to General Stone in explanation of his action he says: "On the evening when you were arrested I submitted to the Secretary the written result of the examination of a refugee from Leesburg. This information, to a certain extent, agreed with the evidence stated to have been taken by the committee, and upon its being imparted to the Secretary he again instructed me to cause

you to be arrested, which I at once did." Injustice must needs be done in times of excitement because of the imperfection of human judgment under the influence of emotional impulse, but there was no sufficient reason why Stone should not have had that protection which the law extends to the meanest criminal, and he was entitled to a speedy trial by his peers. It was indeed a great pity that McClellan, who was then powerful enough, did not insist upon having this right of an officer to a trial granted to Stone, though it is said that he did several times call the attention of the Secretary to the case, but without avail.

The immediate effect of this disaster was to quicken the efforts of McClellan's powerful friends—Montgomery Blair, Senators Wade, Trumbull, and Chandler—to expedite the retirement of General Scott and the advancement of McClellan to the position of general in chief; and shortly afterward he received a private note from Mr. Lincoln, dated November 1st, saying: "Lieutenant-General Scott having been, upon his own application, placed on the list of retired officers, with his advice, and the concurrence of the entire cabinet, I have designated you to command the whole army. You will therefore assume this enlarged duty at once, conferring with me so far as necessary." *

The anxiety of the President for the immediate employment of the army had led to frequent conferences with General McClellan, and toward the end of October he desired the general to submit a paper upon the condition of his forces and the immediate measures to be taken to increase their efficiency. The letter which he addressed to the Secretary of War in obedience to this request embodies his views and suggestions, which are so wholly conformable to those expressed in his memorandum of August 2d as to indicate that he had not departed from his earlier convictions. The following extracts will confirm this deduc-

* McClellan's Own Story, p. 200.

tion. After referring to his previous communications in August and September, in which he had stated the force which he regarded as necessary to advance, he proceeds:

"So much time has passed and the winter is approaching so rapidly that but two courses are left to the Government: viz., either to go into winter quarters, or to assume the offensive with forces greatly inferior in numbers to the army I regarded as desirable and necessary. If political considerations render the first course unadvisable, the second alone remains. While I regret that it has not been deemed expedient, or perhaps possible, to concentrate the forces of the nation in this vicinity (remaining on the defensive elsewhere), keeping the attention and efforts of the Government fixed upon this as the vital point where the issue of the great contest is to be decided, it may still be that, by introducing unity of action and design among the various armies of the land, by determining the courses to be pursued by the various commanders under one general plan, transferring from the other armies the superfluous strength not required for the purpose in view, and thus re-enforcing this main army, whose destiny it is to decide the controversy, we may yet be able to move with a reasonable prospect before the winter is fairly upon us.

"The nation feels, and I share that feeling, that the Army of the Potomac holds the fate of the country in its hands. The stake is so vast, the issue so momentous, and the effect of the next battle will be so important throughout the future as well as the present, that I continue to urge, as I have ever done since I entered upon the command of this army, upon the Government to devote its energies and its available resources toward increasing the numbers and efficiency of the army on which its salvation depends. . . .

"As you are aware, all the information we have from spies, prisoners, etc., agrees in showing that the enemy have a force on the Potomac not less than one

hundred and fifty thousand strong, well drilled and equipped, ably commanded, and strongly intrenched. It is plain, therefore, that to insure success, or to render it reasonably certain, the active army should not number less than one hundred and fifty thousand efficient troops, with four hundred guns, unless some material change occurs in front of us.

"The requisite force for an advance movement by the Army of the Potomac may be thus estimated:

	Men.	Guns.
Column of active operations	150,000	400
Garrison of the city of Washington	35,000	40
To guard the Potomac to Harper's Ferry	5,000	12
To guard the lower Potomac	8,000	24
Garrison for Baltimore and Annapolis	10,000	12
Total effective force required	208,000	488

or an aggregate, present and absent, of about two hundred and forty thousand men, should the losses by sickness, etc., not rise to a higher percentage than at present.

"Having stated what I regard as the requisite force to enable this army to advance, I now proceed to give the actual strength of the Army of the Potomac. The aggregate strength of the Army of the Potomac, by the official report on the morning of the 27th instant, was one hundred and sixty-eight thousand three hundred and eighteen officers and men of all grades and arms. This includes the troops at Baltimore and Annapolis, on the upper and lower Potomac, the sick, absent, etc. The force present for duty was one hundred and forty-seven thousand six hundred and ninety-five. Of this number forty-two hundred and sixty-eight cavalry were completely unarmed, thirty-one hundred and sixty-three cavalry only partially armed, fifty-nine hundred and seventy-nine infantry unequipped, making thirteen thousand four hundred and ten unfit for the field (irrespective of those not yet sufficiently drilled), and reducing the effective force

to one hundred and thirty-four thousand two hundred and eighty-five, and the number disposable for an advance to seventy-six thousand two hundred and eighty-five. The infantry regiments are, to a considerable extent, armed with unserviceable weapons. Quite a large number of good arms, which had been intended for this army, were ordered elsewhere, leaving the Army of the Potomac insufficiently and, in some cases, badly armed. On the 30th of September there were with this army two hundred and twenty-eight field guns ready for the field. So far as arms and equipments are concerned, some of the batteries are still quite raw and unfit to go into action. I have intelligence that eight New York batteries are *en route* hither; two others are ready for the field. I will still (if the New York batteries have six guns each) be one hundred and twelve guns short of the number required for the active column, saying nothing for the present of those necessary for the garrisons and corps on the Potomac, which would make a total deficiency of two hundred guns.

"I have thus briefly stated our present condition and wants. It remains to suggest the means of supplying the deficiencies:

"First. That all the cavalry and infantry arms, as fast as procured, whether manufactured in this country or purchased abroad, be sent to this army until it is fully prepared for the field.

"Second. That the two companies of the Fourth Artillery, now understood to be *en route* from Fort Randall to Fort Monroe, be ordered to this army, to be mounted at once; also that the companies of the Third Artillery, *en route* from California, be sent here. Had not the order for Smead's battery to come here from Harrisburg to replace the battery I gave General Sherman been so often countermanded, I would again ask for it.

"Third. That a more effective regulation may be made authorizing the transfer of men from the volunteers to the regular batteries, infantry, and cavalry,

that we may make the best possible use of the invaluable regular 'skeletons.'

"Fourth. I have no official information as to the United States forces elsewhere, but from the best information I can obtain from the War Department and other sources I am led to believe that the United States troops are:

In Western Virginia about	30,000
In Kentucky	40,000
In Missouri	80,000
In Fortress Monroe	11,000
Total	161,000

"Besides these, I am informed that more than one hundred thousand are in progress of organization in other Northern and Western States.

"I would therefore recommend that, not interfering with Kentucky, there should be retained in Western Virginia and Missouri a sufficient force for defensive purposes, and that the surplus troops be sent to the Army of the Potomac to enable it to assume the offensive; that the same course be pursued in respect to Fortress Monroe, and that no further outside expeditions be attempted until we have fought the great battle in front of us.

"Fifth. That every nerve be strained to hasten the enrollment, organization, and armament of new batteries and regiments of infantry.

"Sixth. That all the battalions now raised for new regiments of regular infantry be at once ordered to this army, and that the old infantry and cavalry *en route* from California be ordered to this army immediately on their arrival in New York.

"I have thus indicated in a general manner the objects to be accomplished and the means by which we may gain our ends. A vigorous employment of these means will, in my opinion, enable the Army of the Potomac to assume successfully this season the offensive operations which, ever since entering upon the command, it has been my anxious desire and dili-

gent effort to prepare for and prosecute. The advance should not be postponed beyond the 25th of November, if possible to avoid it.

"Unity in councils, the utmost vigor and energy in action, are indispensable. The entire military field should be grasped as a whole and not in detached parts. One plan should be agreed upon and pursued; a single will should direct and carry out these plans.

"The great object to be accomplished, the crushing defeat of the rebel army now at Manassas, should never for one instant be lost sight of, but all the intellect and means and men of the Government poured upon that point. The loyal States possess ample force to effect all this and more. The rebels have displayed energy, unanimity, and wisdom worthy of the most desperate days of the French Revolution. Should we do less?

"The unity of this nation, the preservation of our institutions, are so dear to me that I have willingly sacrificed my private happiness with the single object of doing my duty to my country. When the task is accomplished I shall be glad to return to the obscurity from which events have drawn me. Whatever the determination of the Government may be, I will do the best I can with the Army of the Potomac, and will share its fate, whatever may be the task imposed upon me.

"Permit me to add on this occasion, as heretofore, it has been my aim neither to exaggerate nor underrate the power of the enemy, nor fail to express clearly the means by which, in my judgment, that power may be broken.

"Urging the energy of preparation and action, which has ever been my choice, but with the fixed purpose by no act of mine to expose the Government to hazard by premature movement, and requesting that this communication may be laid before the President, I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant." *

* Official War Records, vol. v, p. 9 *et seq.*

CHAPTER VII.

INACTIVITY OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.—PLAN OF PENINSULAR CAMPAIGN EVOLVED.

Up to the time when McClellan had been placed in command of all the armies his position had been practically unassailable. He had secured the safety of Washington by surrounding it with a strong line of fortifications and organized a powerful army for its defence; its security was therefore assured. But neither the army, Administration, nor people would be content with merely passive resistance, and the minds of all were troubled as to what McClellan would do, now that he was practically in supreme control of the military forces of the nation under the President who had the utmost confidence in his ability. All men of position have their critics and detractors, and McClellan had his. Many of his subordinate generals felt aggrieved that they were kept outside of the circle of intimate relations with him and in ignorance of his general plan; they resented the establishment of his headquarters in the city, where he could learn nothing of the temper and condition of his troops, and complained among themselves that he was surrounded by an impenetrable military cordon of flatterers and sycophants. He had encouraged the idea that he desired an active movement of the army, but was restrained and hampered by the opposition of the general in chief. Here, now, was his golden opportunity; a bold stride forward in the early days of November, with an army tired of the monotony of camp life and devoted to him, would have silenced his critics and justified his previous inaction. Any aggressive

action at that time would have strengthened the Administration and received its heartiest support; and, as we know now, it would have met with such sufficient success as to have heartened the people, depressed the enemy, and vitalized the army with its necessary baptism of fire. There is every reason to suppose that his inactivity up to this time may be accounted for by considering the cumulative effect of the following causes: A settled belief in the superior strength and discipline of the enemy in his immediate front; an apprehension lest the enemy should attack before his organization had been effectively completed and the fortifications of the city sufficiently developed to insure its safety; a constitutional lack of aggressiveness which debarred him from taking the initiative; and the constantly elusive hope that the question of the command of the army would be speedily settled so that he could formulate a plan that would embrace all the armies and bring about a decisive result. Considering all these things it is a reasonable inference that he never really intended to assume the initiative until he became general in chief, and this inference is perfectly consistent with the views expressed by him as to the conduct of the war, in his memorandum of August 2d, to the President. Throughout the whole period of his subordinate command, from July 27th to November 1st, his attitude is entirely consistent with his determination to create an army of such a character in organization, discipline, and strength that when it was completely ready its forward movement would be irresistible. That stage of its development had just been reached when he felt that he could safely employ his divisions in making armed reconnoissances in their immediate front with some success, when the disaster of Ball's Bluff came with its deterring influence to cause him to resume his inactive policy.

And now that he was installed in his office as general in chief he gave himself up to consider the more extended problems committed to his charge, and this necessitated a still greater delay. He soon ascertained

that no general plan of operations looking to the simultaneous employment of all the armies existed, and that the state of preparation and organization of the armies in the West were such as to preclude, in his opinion, any movement of the Army of the Potomac until this condition of things was remedied. For this purpose he issued, November 9th, Orders No. 97, creating four departments out of the three existing departments of the West, the Cumberland, and the Ohio; these were the Department of New Mexico, to which Colonel E. R. S. Canby was assigned as commander; the Department of Kansas, Major-General Hunter commanding; the Department of Missouri, embracing the States of Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Arkansas, and that portion of Kentucky west of the Cumberland River, Major-General Halleck commanding; and the Department of Ohio, comprising the States of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Tennessee, and that portion of Kentucky east of the Cumberland River, Major-General Buell commanding. McClellan had now the whole theater of war under his personal supervision and direction, and relying upon the ability and character of the generals whom he had selected as his lieutenants to command the western departments, he spared no pains to impress upon them the purposes he had in view. With regard to the commanders of the two important Departments of the Missouri and the Ohio, covering the whole Mississippi Valley, Halleck had a wide reputation as a military writer, and Buell had, under McClellan's own eye, developed a capacity for organization and discipline of the greatest promise. In addition to full oral instructions he sent them written communications for their guidance which exhibit substantially the parts of the general plan that he expected them to execute. It is necessary here to refer only to the military aspects of their instructions. To Buell he wrote: "The military problem would be a simple one could it be entirely separated from political influences. Such is not the

case. Were the population among which you are to operate wholly or generally hostile, it is probable that Nashville should be your first and principal objective point. It so happens that a large majority of the inhabitants of Eastern Tennessee are in favor of the Union. It therefore seems proper that you should remain on the defensive on the line from Louisville to Nashville, while you throw the mass of your forces by rapid marches, by Cumberland Gap or Walker's Gap, on Knoxville, in order to occupy the railroad at that point, and thus enable the loyal citizens of Eastern Tennessee to rise, while you at the same time cut off the railway communication between Eastern Virginia and the Mississippi. It will be prudent to fortify the pass before leaving it in your rear." *

And again on November 12th he writes: "The main point to which I desire to call your attention is the necessity of entering Eastern Tennessee as soon as it can be done with reasonable chances of success, and I hope that you will, with the least possible delay, organize a column for that purpose, sufficiently guarding at the same time the main avenues by which the rebels may invade Kentucky." †

To Halleck he writes: "With respect to military operations, it is probable, from the best information in my possession, that the interests of the Government will be best served by fortifying and holding in considerable strength Rolla, Sedalia, and other interior points, keeping strong patrols constantly moving from the terminal stations, and concentrating the mass of the troops on or near the Mississippi, prepared for such ulterior operations as the public interests may demand." ‡

In these letters he also expressed particular anxiety that they should bear in mind "the precise issue for which we are fighting. That issue is the preservation

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* Official War Records, vol. v, p. 38.
† Ibid.
‡ Ibid., p. 37.

of the Union and the restoration of the full authority of the General Government over all the portions of our territory," and that this could best be accomplished "by religiously respecting the constitutional rights of all." There was nothing to show that he expected that military operations were to be immediately undertaken, and it seems certain that McClellan did not himself entertain the idea for either the eastern or western armies; it was evident that the remainder of the fall and the winter were to be utilized for preparation.

From this time on McClellan's almost imperial direction of military affairs was checked, and he began to experience the undermining influences of interrogation. The fine weather was passing and the magnificently appointed army was inert. "All quiet on the Potomac," formerly calming apprehension and heard with abiding comfort, now began to excite ridicule and became a jesting byword. And now, too, the political considerations began to assert themselves in anticipation of the approaching meeting of Congress. The increasing difficulty of meeting financial obligations, the alarming heaping up of the public debt, the imminent danger of foreign recognition of the Confederacy and possible armed intervention of European powers necessarily demanded speedy military success somewhere to insure the stability of the Administration, which had not as yet firmly established itself in the confidence of the ablest political leaders and influential editorial exponents of public opinion. In the midst of all this seething turmoil McClellan held himself with unbending dignity and impenetrable reserve. Fearing betrayal in a city full of the enemy's spies and sympathizers, he had but few intimates and gave his full confidence to no one. A brilliant and numerous staff surounded his headquarters in the city, where he held a daily levee, at which men of all grades presented themselves, from the President to the humblest seeker of his favor. Overburdened as he was he could not possibly give an audience to even a fraction of his callers, and it frequently happened that powerful

and influential men in public service were obliged to cool their heels while waiting an opportunity to be admitted into his presence, and it is even alleged that the President was subjected to some unintentional discourtesy which had for its consequence a sensible diminution of his friendly regard.

And now it began to be commented upon that McClellan's adherents were men who were politically opposed to the Administration, and that they were continually sounding his praises and magnifying his importance. On the other hand, the radical leaders who desired speedy action found that other generals were not in accord with the commanding general's policy of inaction, so that suspicion of his motives for this delay was engendered which gradually grew into enlarging distrust of his ability and his purposes. The most criminal of ambitions was attributed to him, while, on the other hand, his friends similarly entertained the belief that the war was to be prolonged by the Administration in the interest of the abolition of slavery. Both were grievously in error. But the conditions were favorable to such an increase of the distrust felt by each for the other as to make the separation wider day by day. The President remained through it all the stanch supporter of McClellan and had to suffer vicariously for his alleged shortcomings, and shared with him the vituperations that were heaped upon the head of his general in chief. There are several incidents to which some attention should be paid which tended to affect adversely the relations of McClellan with the President and the men of influence associated with him.

1. The blockade of the Potomac by the Confederates, which commenced in August, and soon grew to be so effective as to deprive the Union forces of this line of supply. The importance of keeping the Potomac River open for navigation to Washington was obvious, and it naturally fell upon the navy to see to it. For this purpose it was deemed essential that Mathias Point should be occupied by a strong force of

Union troops, and that the river should be patrolled by an armed flotilla of navy vessels. The left bank was securely held, but there were several points on the Virginia side at which batteries could be securely erected by the Confederates to close the river, or at least to make its navigation precarious. Early in May sites for such batteries at the mouth of Acquia Creek were selected, and soon after guns were mounted. Captain Craven, of the United States Navy, who was assigned to the command of the Potomac flotilla after the death of Commander Ward, killed (June 28th) in an attack on Mathias Point, was untiring in his endeavors to keep open the navigation of the river, but the rifled guns of the Confederates, placed in well-protected batteries at Freestone Point, Cockpit Point, and Evansport during the months of August, September, and October, effectually closed the river by the latter part of October. The importance of Mathias Point was recognized by every one, and although the Confederates never succeeded in erecting a battery of heavy guns there, it was considered by the Secretary of the Navy and his subordinates of such essential importance to the control of the river that a force of four thousand troops was asked for from the army to secure its occupation. The President earnestly desired it, and in expectation that an expedition for this purpose had received the assent of General McClellan the navy was ready to assist in the landing on two designated nights. But the troops did not come, and in the opinion of the Navy Department McClellan treated the matter rather cavalierly, and the President was himself somewhat chagrined. McClellan had satisfied himself of the uselessness of the proposed expedition, fearing that it would bring on a general engagement at an unsuitable time, and was confirmed in this opinion by the views of his chief engineer, General Barnard. He did not regard the line of the Potomac as a vital one, and believed its importance to be more a moral than a physical one. Captain Craven became disheartened at this lack of co-operation, and, feeling that his reputation

was at stake, applied for sea service October 23d, and the important vessels of the naval flotilla were ordered on other service. Practically, this line ceased to be an open one after October 25th, and thereafter vessels were obliged to assume their own risk in going up or down the river.

2. The relief of the Union people in East Tennessee. This was a subject which the President had very much at heart and was anxious from both political and sympathetic reasons to undertake without delay. That McClellan was in full accord with the President is manifest from the prominence which he gave to it in his letter of instructions to Buell immediately after assigning him to the command of the Department of the Ohio, and his persistency in urging it again and again. He expected that a strong movement immediately undertaken against Cumberland Gap would cut the Confederate communication between the Mississippi Valley and Eastern Virginia, protect the Unionists in Tennessee, and re-establish the Government of the Union in the eastern portion of that State, and he was fully impressed with the great necessity of making the movement with the least possible delay. Buell answers these instructions of McClellan November 27th, in a letter giving a full exposition of the condition of his command and the situation of its different parts, and says: "And now for a plan of campaign. Up to the organization of columns behind Salt River all the plans I have in view at present concur. Beyond that they diverge, and may be stated briefly and candidly thus: First, to establish a sufficient force before Bowling Green to hold Buckner there, while a column moves into East Tennessee by Somerset and the route we had in view; second, to hold him in check while a column moves rapidly past him on Nashville by the turnpike *via* Gallatin; and, third, holding him in check at Bowling Green and throwing in columns on both Somerset and Nashville routes." * In

* Official War Records, vol. vii, p. 450.

answer to this McClellan expresses himself as completely satisfied with Buell's letter, and, while agreeing with his views, suggests * that a column of fifteen thousand men might be sent to East Tennessee, while a strong attack of fifty thousand men should be made against Nashville, and, in closing, says: "I think we owe it to our Union friends in Eastern Tennessee to protect them at all hazards. First, secure that; then, if you possess the means, carry Nashville." Again, early in December, in forwarding two letters that had been written by the loyal Colonel S. P. Carter to the Hon. Horace Maynard, and by the latter sent to the President, he writes Buell: "I inclose two letters, which were referred to me by the President and were intended for your eye. I do so, feeling sure that you sympathize with me in my intense regard for the noble Union men of Eastern Tennessee; that you will overlook all mere matters of form, and that you will devote all your energies toward the salvation of men so eminently deserving our protection. I understand your movements and fully concur in their propriety, but I must still urge the occupation of Eastern Tennessee as a duty we owe our gallant friends there who have not hesitated to espouse our cause.

"Please send, then, with the least possible delay, troops enough to protect these men. I still feel sure that the best strategical move in this case will be that dictated by the simple feelings of humanity. We must preserve these noble fellows from harm; everything urges us to do that—faith, interest, loyalty. For the sake of these Eastern Tennesseeans who have taken part with us I would gladly sacrifice mere military advantages; they deserve our protection, and at all hazards they must have it. You may fully rely on my full support in the movement I have so much at heart —the liberation of Eastern Tennessee. . . . If you gain and retain possession of Eastern Tennessee you

* Official War Records, vol. vii, p. 457.

will have won brighter laurels than any I hope to gain." *

This attitude in favor of immediate help to the loyal people of East Tennessee McClellan never abandoned, and he never ceased to urge upon Buell in terms that almost amounted to a positive order to undertake such a campaign. In the meantime McClellan was suffering from a serious illness, and from his sick-bed dispatched to Buell, December 29th: "Johnson, Maynard, etc., are again becoming frantic, and have President Lincoln's sympathy excited. Political considerations would make it advisable to get the arms and troops into Eastern Tennessee at a very early day; you are, however, the best judge. Can you tell me about when and in what force you will be in Eastern Tennessee?" † To which Buell replied: "I intend a column of twelve thousand men and three batteries for East Tennessee; but, as I have telegraphed you, it is impossible to fix a time for it to be there, so much depends on the circumstances which may arise in the meantime." ‡ And now the President in his anxiety telegraphs Buell, McClellan being sick: "Have arms gone forward for East Tennessee? Please tell me the progress and condition of the movement in that direction." # To which Buell answers: "Arms can only go forward for East Tennessee under the protection of an army. My organization of the troops has had in view two columns with reference to that movement: a division to move from Lebanon and a brigade to operate offensively or defensively, according to circumstances, on the Cumberland Gap route; but it was necessary also to have regard to contingencies which, before the transportation, arms, etc., could be ready, might require a modification of the plan. The time and manner of the movement must still be subject to such contingencies, though I hope to inaugurate it very soon. Our transportation and other

* Official War Records, vol. vii, p. 468.
† Ibid., p. 926. ‡ Ibid., p. 521. # Ibid., p. 530.

preparations have been delayed far beyond my expectations, and are still incomplete. The arms—foreign ones, requiring repairs—arrived a week or more ago, and are now being put in order by the ordnance officer.

"While my preparations have had this movement constantly in view, I will confess to your Excellency that I have been bound to it more by my sympathy for the people of East Tennessee and the anxiety with which you and the general in chief have desired it than by my opinion of its wisdom as an unconditional measure. As earnestly as I wish to accomplish it, my judgment has from the first been decidedly against it, if it should render at all doubtful the success of a movement against the great power of the rebellion in the West, which is mainly arrayed on the line from Columbus to Bowling Green, and can speedily be concentrated at any point of that line which is attacked singly." *

Mr. Lincoln's answer is pathetic. He says, January 6th: "Your dispatch of yesterday has been received, and it disappoints and distresses me. I have shown it to General McClellan, who says he will write you to-day. I am not competent to criticise your views, and therefore what I offer is merely in justification of myself. Of the two, I would rather have a point on the railroad south of Cumberland Gap than Nashville—first, because it cuts a great artery of the enemy's communication, which Nashville does not; and, secondly, because it is in the midst of loyal people who would rally round it, while Nashville is not. Again, I can not see why the movement on East Tennessee would not be a diversion in your favor rather than a disadvantage, assuming that a movement toward Nashville is the main object. But my distress is that our friends in East Tennessee are being hanged and driven to despair, and even now, I fear, are thinking of taking rebel arms for the sake of personal protec-

* Official War Records, vol. vii, p. 530.

tion. In this we lose the most valuable stake we have in the South. My dispatch, to which yours is an answer, was sent with the knowledge of Senator Johnson and Representative Maynard, of East Tennessee, and they will be upon me to know the answer, which I can not safely show them. They would despair, possibly resign, to go and save their families somehow or die with them. I do not intend this to be an order in any sense, but merely, as intimated before, to show you the grounds of my anxiety." *

McClellan's letter of the same date shows his full accord with the President's views. He says: "There are few things I have more at heart than the prompt movement of a strong column into Eastern Tennessee. The political consequences of the delay of this movement will be much more serious than you seem to anticipate. If relief is not soon afforded those people we shall lose them entirely, and with them the power of inflicting the most severe blow upon the secession cause. I was extremely sorry to learn from your telegram to the President that you had from the beginning attached little or no importance to a movement in East Tennessee. I had not so understood your views, and it develops a radical difference between your views and my own, which I deeply regret. My own general plans for the prosecution of the war make the speedy occupation of East Tennessee and its lines of railway matters of absolute necessity. Bowling Green and Nashville are in that connection of very secondary importance at the present moment. My own advance can not, according to my present views, be made until your troops are solidly established in the eastern portion of Tennessee. If that is not possible, a complete and prejudicial change in my own plans at once becomes necessary. Interesting as Nashville may be to the Louisville interests, it strikes me that its possession is of very secondary importance in comparison with the immense results that would arise from the

* Official War Records, vol. vii, p. 927.

adherence to our cause of the masses in East Tennessee, West North Carolina, South Carolina, North Georgia, and Alabama, results that I feel assured would ere long flow from the movement I allude to. Halleck, from his own account, will not soon be in a condition to support properly a movement up the Cumberland. Why not make the movement independently of and without waiting for that? I regret that I have not strength enough to write a fuller and more intelligible letter, but this is my very first effort at writing for somewhat more than two weeks." *

In his convalescence McClellan again recurs to this movement as of essential importance, saying, January 13th: "You have no idea of the pressure brought to bear here upon the Government for a forward movement. It is so strong that it seems absolutely necessary to make the advance on Eastern Tennessee at once. I incline to this as a first step for many reasons. Your possession of the railroad there will surely prevent the main army in my front from being re-enforced, and may force Johnston to detach. Its political effect will be very great." † But nothing finally came of it. Buell was unable from lack of transportation to put the expedition to East Tennessee upon a successful basis, and in the meantime General Thomas's defeat of the Confederates under General Zollicoffer at Logan's Crossroads, January 19th, followed by General Grant's capture of Fort Henry, February 6th, and his investment of Fort Donelson ten days afterward, put an end to every immediate endeavor to carry out the campaign that the President and general in chief had so set their hearts upon. But this failure was not without its influence in weakening the support that McClellan had heretofore received from the political element surrounding the President.

3. The creation of the Committee on the Conduct of the War. This committee, as has been before stated, was appointed in December, 1861, and consisted of

* Official War Records, vol. vii, p. 531. † Ibid., p. 547.

three members of the Senate and four members of the House of Representatives. The senators were Benjamin F. Wade, Zachary Chandler, and Andrew Johnson; the representatives were D. W. Gooch, John Covode, G. W. Julian, and M. F. Odell. This committee held its first meeting December 20th, the day after the committee was completed by the action of the House, and Senator Wade was selected as its chairman. They were all men of strong character, and although none of them had had any military education, it was not long before they felt sufficient confidence in their military perception to be able to subject military operations to the crucial test of their own convictions. This is indicated in the following extract which occurs in their first report: "Your committee therefore concluded that they would best perform their duty by endeavoring to obtain such information in respect to the conduct of the war as would best enable them to advise what mistakes had been made in the past and the proper course to be pursued in the future; to obtain such information as the many and laborious duties of the President and his Cabinet prevented them from acquiring, and to lay it before them with such recommendations and suggestions as seemed to be most imperatively demanded; and the journal of the proceedings of your committee shows that for a long time they were in constant communication with the President and his Cabinet, and neglected no opportunity of at once laying before them the information acquired by them in the course of their investigation. . . . It was apparent from the first that your committee would be compelled to confine their attention to a few of the more prominent subjects of inquiry: to those the investigation of which would best enable them to comprehend the causes and necessity, if any, for the delay and inaction characterizing the operations of our armies in the field.

"And while each of those subjects has received from them the attention which its importance merited, so far as they were able to give it, the attention of your

committee has been turned more particularly to the history of the Army of the Potomac. In the history of that army is to be found all that is necessary to enable your committee to report upon 'the conduct of the war.' Had that army fulfilled all that a generous and confiding people were justified in expecting from it, this rebellion had long since been crushed and the blessings of peace restored to this nation. The failure of that army to fulfill those expectations has prolonged this contest to the present time, with all its expenditure of life and treasure, for it has to a great extent neutralized, if not entirely destroyed, the legitimate fruits which would otherwise have been reaped from our glorious victories in the West." *

A study of the report submitted by this committee shows that it exercised a most potent political influence upon the military situation. Composed of men not only ignorant of the military art but unconscious of their ignorance, they soon evolved their own individual plans of campaign, which they endeavored to fortify by testimony from witnesses brought before them. These witnesses, whose testimony was not subjected to the crucial tests of cross-examination, were interrogated upon every point that entered the minds of their questioners, not excluding the confidential information imparted to them in regard to the plans of the general in chief. Never before had such a tribunal been brought into existence. Exercising enormous influence in Congress as a committee, the individual members being men of restless activity and radical views and of the strongest patriotism, they powerfully affected not only the action of the War Department, but the judgment of the President himself. They never seriously entertained any other conviction than that acts of Congress could create disciplined armies out of patriotic volunteers without having recourse to the time requisite to organize, drill, and discipline them.

* Report of Committee on Conduct of the War, vol. i, p. 4.

Immediately after the committee was organized McClellan was invited to appear at his convenience for an interview before proceeding in their official duties. He replied that he would do himself the honor to appear before them on the morning of December 23d, but before the designated time he was stricken with typhoid fever and was prevented by the serious character of his illness from attending until January 15th, when there was a full and free conference between him and the committee in relation to various matters connected with the conduct of the war, but which, however, does not appear in their published report. The tenor of the investigation conducted by the committee previous to this interview indicated that the immobility of the Army of the Potomac, the Potomac blockade, the reduction of the cavalry force, the failure of McClellan to call his generals of divisions together for consultation in councils of war, were among the most prominent subjects touched upon. As the chairman, Senator Wade, expressed it, "We must run some risk; we can not keep such an army as this without doing something; we must get money for the army, and to get that we must do something, and do it as soon as it can be done; we must run a little hazard." * General McClellan was, of course, aware of the general character of the committee's investigations, and that it was certainly tending to weaken his influence with the Secretary of War and the President; and while it was not a war council composed of military men whose judgments were entitled to acceptance and control, its influence was to be feared from the star-chamber character of its proceedings, and its connection with the legislative branch of the Government.

4. The appointment of Edwin M. Stanton to succeed Simon Cameron as Secretary of War. During Mr. Cameron's term of office McClellan was practically unhampered in his direction of military affairs, and he had reason to suppose that the same condition of

* Report of Committee on Conduct of the War, vol. i, p. 128.

things would prevail with the new Secretary, as the latter, up to the time of his appointment, had given to McClellan such evidence of friendly regard and personal confidence that it was generally believed that the determining cause of his selection was the fact of this intimacy. But it was not long after Mr. Stanton had entered upon the duties of his office before McClellan found that the atmosphere of the War Department had measurably lowered in temperature so far as he was concerned. Instead of the confidential and appreciative reception to which he had been accustomed, he was soon made to feel the chilling and repelling attitude of official superiority, and then the loss of confidence and professional distrust. Given McClellan's dignity and natural reserve, this unexpected treatment kept him away as much as possible from the War Department and closed all the avenues of friendly intercourse that had heretofore existed between the two men. To McClellan this too sudden change was inexplicable, and notwithstanding the several instances of attempted reconciliation that afterward occurred, it is certain that this mutual distrust, thus early engendered, was always a potent factor in the conduct of military operations.

Like all men of strong individuality, this remarkable war secretary possessed many contradictory traits of character. His judgments of men and measures, often necessarily hastily formed from inadequate knowledge of facts, were frequently harsh and unjust. But the armor of his intense patriotism and sterling integrity was absolutely without spot or blemish. Anxious for immediate results, he was masterful in denouncing all delay as procrastination. He ignored the routine of the War Department bureaucracy whenever he chose, and terrorized its officials by his dominating methods of procedure. Capable of indefatigable and continuous labor, he spared neither himself nor his subordinates in the transaction of public business. Urgent in his efforts to end the state of immobility that he found in the army and unable to understand

the cause of McClellan's inactivity, he soon became an active ally of the Committee on the Conduct of the War to remedy this state of affairs. Actuated by this antagonism, he opposed, though not always openly, McClellan's plan of campaign, and sometimes indulged in contemptuous expressions reflecting upon the latter's military ability and purposes, which, being repeated to McClellan, could not but widen the separation between these two men.

In addition to these more prominent causes of lessened influence with the Administration, the ill-advised laudations of many of McClellan's partisan admirers, the reserve in which, with few exceptions, he held himself toward his general officers, the seeming indifference to criticism, the love of display as exhibited in the frequent reviews, each added its effect to the growing disaffection, and gave the general public the impression that he was unable to utilize the magnificent army under his command. After Mr. Stanton's advent McClellan was not able to confer so freely with the President as before, and he was forced into an attitude where he was obliged to defend his policy and justify his apparent apathy. All this time he had in reality been deeply pondering upon a plan of campaign just as soon as the methodical nature of his mind permitted the necessary leisure after he had attended to the demands that the western departments made upon his time and attention. There were also several expeditions which had been undertaken, and he had been compelled to give much time and thought to their organization and equipment. To these we shall now briefly refer.

Early in September General McClellan had recommended to the Secretary of War the formation of two brigades of five regiments each, of New England men particularly adapted to coast service, desiring to use them for operations in the inlets of Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac upon vessels of light draught which were to follow on the flank of the main army when it made its advanced movement. Much delay ensued

before this organization was effected, and as the army did not then move the original purpose of this organization was abandoned. During November and December these troops were utilized for an expedition which was being fitted out under General Burnside for a descent upon the North Carolina coast, similar to that which in the following January, under General T. W. Sherman and Commodore Dupont, captured Hilton Head in Port Royal Harbor on the South Carolina coast. Burnside's expedition sailed from Hampton Roads January 11th, under specific instructions from General McClellan, and was convoyed by a strong naval force commanded by Commodore Goldsborough. After a stormy passage it crossed the bar at Hatteras Inlet, assaulted and captured Roanoke Island, Beaufort, and Newbern in North Carolina. The general in chief, while in the midst of the troubles attending the birth of the plan finally adopted for the movement of the Army of the Potomac, sent instructions to General T. W. Sherman looking to the reduction of Fort Pulaski, February 14th, and to General B. F. Butler in command of the land forces in the New Orleans expedition, February 23d. The objects contemplated in the several expeditions were eventually carried out: Fort Pulaski capitulated April 11, 1862, and New Orleans was surrendered May 25th to the navy, and was almost immediately occupied by the forces under General Butler. McClellan's connection with these operations was confined to the general instructions which his position as general in chief required of him, and which are found embodied in his letters of instruction already referred to.

From the time of McClellan's assignment to the command of the Division of the Potomac he devoted all his efforts, influence, and ability to the formation of a great army on the lines laid down in his memorandum of August 2d. Everything goes to show that he did not intend to be diverted from this fixed purpose, and, considering his inherent characteristics, his conduct of affairs is consistent with this point of view

and with this alone. There was one important factor, however, which had a preponderating influence and for which he is to be held entirely responsible, that, had it been eliminated, would have changed the whole complexion of the problem. It was the entirely erroneous estimate of the strength of the Confederate forces in front of the Army of the Potomac. Trusting to his service of information, a trust that should have been shaken by the manifest improbability of its reports, McClellan was forced to adopt for a reasonable time a defensive attitude and a waiting policy. But had he known, even approximately, Johnston's strength, he could not have justified beyond the middle of October the delay of an aggressive movement against the long line of the Confederate position. And even granting his belief in this erroneous estimate, the unmolested occupation of Mason's and Munson's Hills by the Confederate outposts for so long a time, his acquiescence in the blockade of the Potomac, and his failure to employ strong reconnoissances to get reliable information are difficult to comprehend. It is not a sufficient answer to say that this erroneous belief in the enemy's strength was universal, for of all men McClellan alone had the means within his own control to arrive at the truth, and these means were not advantageously employed.

Firmly believing that he was overmatched by the enemy, he felt apprehensive all through August and the greater part of September lest he should be attacked, and every day that passed without such an attack was to him a day gained. During October he felt secure in his defensive position and would have welcomed an aggressive movement on the part of the enemy. But there is no satisfactory evidence that he contemplated any advance of his army except as a remote possibility. Awaiting Scott's retirement, he seemed to be content with frequent reviews and inspections, and intrenching himself behind an impenetrable reserve, and breathing an atmosphere of flattery and adulation, he practically became an isolated mili-

tary autocrat whose designs were unknown save to one or two of his intimate personal friends. Even after McClellan had attained to the command as general in chief the situation remained practically unchanged, for he found himself overwhelmed with the responsibilities of his increased command, and November passed without any sign of activity in the ranks of that army upon which the hopes of the nation rested. The President, harassed and anxious, while publicly defending and sustaining him, felt constrained privately to impress upon him the immediate necessity of doing something, and about the 1st of December himself conceived a plan which, with characteristic thoughtfulness, he privately submitted in an autograph memorandum for McClellan's consideration:

"If it were determined to make a forward movement of the Army of the Potomac, without awaiting further increase of numbers or better drill and discipline, how long would it require to actually get in motion?"

Answer by McClellan: "If bridge-trains ready, by December 15th—probably 25th."

"After leaving all that would be necessary, how many troops could join the movement from southwest of the river?"

Answer: "Seventy-one thousand."

"How many from northeast of it?"

Answer: "Thirty-three thousand."

"Suppose, then, that of those southwest of the river, fifty thousand [inserted by McClellan] move forward and menace the enemy at Centreville, the remainder of the movable force on that side move rapidly to the crossing of the Occoquan by the road from Alexandria toward Richmond, there to be joined by the whole movable force from northeast of the river, having landed from the Potomac just below the mouth of the Occoquan, moved by land up the south side of that stream to the crossing-point named; then the whole move together, by the road thence to Brentville and beyond, to the railroad just south of its cross-

ing of Broad Run, a strong detachment of cavalry having gone rapidly ahead to destroy the railroad bridges south and north of the point.

"If the crossing of the Occoquan by those from above be resisted, those landing from the Potomac below to take the resisting force of the enemy in rear; or, if the landing from the Potomac be resisted, those crossing the Occoquan from above to take that resisting force in rear. Both points will probably not be successfully resisted at the same time. The force in front of Centreville, if pressed too hardly, should fight back slowly into the intrenchments behind them. Armed vessels and transportation should remain at the Potomac landing to cover a possible retreat." *

McClellan's reply to this suggested plan was rather more curt and tardy than the distinguished position of its author as well as its own intrinsic merit warranted. "I inclose," he writes in reply, "the paper you left with me, filled as you requested. In arriving at the numbers given I have left the minimum number in garrison and observation.

"Information received recently leads me to believe that the enemy could meet us in front with equal forces nearly, and I have now my mind actively turned toward another plan of campaign that I do not think at all anticipated by the enemy, nor by many of our own people." †

This is certainly the first definite reference that is to be found in any of the published records of the war indicating that any definite plan had been formulated by him, and, as appears from the statement of his chief engineer, General Barnard, this plan is in reality that of the lower Chesapeake. "On one of the last days of November," says General Barnard, "I was at General McClellan's headquarters, and found myself alone with him. Casually, apparently, he mentioned the plan he had recently conceived of moving the army, by water, to the Rappahannock. The features of the

* Official War Records, vol. xi, part iii, p. 6. † Ibid.

plan, as I now recollect, were principally these: to carry the whole, or at least the greater part, of the army to Urbana by water, and by a rapid march to cut off and 'bag' Magruder's force on the Peninsula—seize Richmond, all before Johnston's force from Manassas could arrive to succor it. To prevent or at least delay the arrival of that army, the railroad bridges of the different roads between Richmond and Manassas were at the proper moment to be destroyed. The general intimated that he had agents to do this work upon whom he could rely." *

The results of General Barnard's reflections upon this plan are entitled to the highest consideration, for he was an officer of experience, well qualified by his scientific attainments and the analytical powers of his mind to express an opinion upon any question of strategy; they are embodied in two memoranda dated December 5th and 6th. In the first, Barnard says:

"The idea of shifting the theater of operations to the James, York, or Rappahannock has often occurred. The great difficulty I have found in this matter is that of moving a body as large as necessary rapidly, and of making the necessary preparations for such a movement so that they should not, in themselves, give indications of the whereabouts of the intended operations in time to meet them.

"The first thing to be considered is the *old* danger attending all similar operations. In cutting the enemy's line of operations you expose yourself; and a bold and desperate enemy, seeing himself anticipated at Richmond, might attempt to retrieve the disaster by a desperate effort upon Washington. Leaving, then, as we should do, the great mass of the enemy in front of Washington, it would not be safe to leave it guarded by less than one hundred thousand men—that is, until we became certain that he had withdrawn from our front so far as to render his return upon it impracticable. It seems to me, too, that the *full garrisoning*

* Barnard's Peninsular Campaign, p. 51.

of the works up to the standard fixed upon should be completed without delay. These works will but imperfectly serve their purpose if they are not defended by troops who have some familiarity with their position. . . .

"I dwell upon this matter somewhat, since if the army moves—particularly if it makes a flank movement leaving the enemy in front—the measures for defence of the city can not be too carefully taken.

"Now as to the expedition. Considering the great difficulty of transporting, *at one time*, large numbers—the confusion which will attend the landing, and consequent difficulty of getting the columns into prompt *marching* order after landing, with our new troops, if the numbers are great—I should be disposed to make the first descent with a comparatively small but select corps—not over twenty, at outside thirty thousand men." *

In the memorandum of December 6th he says:

"When you suggested to me a Southern movement I told you that my ideas had turned toward Norfolk. Its capture would not be so great an operation as the *successful* execution of the project you propose, still it seems to me worthy of consideration as attended with less risk. To execute successfully the operation you propose with a moderate army (say twenty or thirty thousand men), to be afterward re-enforced, depends upon auxiliary aids which *may* fail.

"If the railroad bridges are not destroyed, or but imperfectly, the enemy may overwhelm our expeditionary army; while to execute the difficult operation of transferring at once a *large* army—say one hundred thousand men—to that line, I look upon as impracticable, if not otherwise imprudent.

"There is one very important consideration in this matter of changing the line of operations. The Army of the Potomac has an object of immense importance

* Official War Records, vol. v, p. 671.

to defend—the capital, to lose which would be almost to lose everything.

"We can not withdraw the bulk of the army from Washington with the enemy in our front; I would not trust enough to its fortifications for that.

"On the other hand, the enemy in front has nothing to defend. If we throw thirty thousand or fifty thousand men on to the Rappahannock, he can abandon entirely his position at Manassas, and have object enough to do so in the hope of overwhelming our force; and I think it is too great a hazard to risk, upon the expectation of his railroad bridges being destroyed.

"There is another operation which I should think well worthy of weighing. To throw an army of thirty thousand men on to Norfolk, landing between the Elizabeth and Nansemond. The enemy's army at Norfolk would be cut off. The Nansemond and Dismal Swamp would, I should judge by the map, give us a defensive line against the enemy's re-enforcements (breaking the railroad as far as possible), and the capture of Norfolk would be, if not so brilliant and decisive as what you propose, yet a great blow, particularly if, at the same time, we captured its army. At the same time a demonstration in force on the enemy in our front would either prevent his making detachments, or compel him to abandon his position and his batteries on the Potomac." *

It does not appear that Barnard's criticism had sufficient influence upon the mind of the general in chief to cause him to modify his plan or to undertake a separate movement for the capture of Norfolk, for there is plenty of evidence that the grand plan of transporting the bulk of his immense army to the Peninsula constantly grew in his mind and thrust aside every other conception. The only indication that the President was aware of his general plan appears in his statement of the interview at the White House, January 13th, to be noted hereafter. But McClellan, of his own

* Barnard's Peninsular Campaign, p. 54.

volition, confidentially laid his plans before the Secretary of the Treasury at an interview December 12th, as a measure of relief to the latter, who was then seriously troubled in his financial administration by the uncertainty as to military operations. Mr. Chase was delighted, said it was a most brilliant conception, and thanked McClellan most cordially for the confidence he had thus reposed in him. So that at this time the plan had been sufficiently matured to be determined upon by the general in chief. Very unfortunately McClellan was shortly afterward prostrated by a severe attack of typhoid fever, and for three weeks was unable to see the President and confer with him in regard to army affairs. Mr. Lincoln, who had called to see him on January 10th but was unsuccessful, became apprehensive lest McClellan's illness would prove fatal and the army be left without a directing head at this critical juncture. Congress was in session and embarrassing questions were being asked; the severest criticisms on the immobility of the army were being indulged in; the Committee on the Conduct of the War was formed, and the utmost dissatisfaction universally prevailed. The President was in danger of becoming the vicarious sacrifice unless something were speedily done. Under these circumstances Mr. Lincoln, upon the advice of General Meigs, Quartermaster General of the Army, sent for Generals McDowell and Franklin, on the 10th of January, to take counsel with them as to the possibility of beginning active operations with the Army of the Potomac at an early day.

General McDowell committed to writing the substance of what occurred at the interviews that followed, and his account, taken in connection with McClellan's statement of the incidents of the last interview, gives an insight into the causes that led to a wider divergence between the general in chief and the President. From McDowell's memorandum we learn that the first interview was held at the White House at eight o'clock, January 10th, at which were present the President, Secretaries Seward and Chase, Assistant

Secretary of War Scott, and Generals McDowell and Franklin.

"The President was greatly disturbed at the state of affairs; spoke of the exhausted condition of the treasury; of the loss of public credit; of the Jacobinism of Congress; of the delicate condition of our foreign relations; of the bad news he had received from the West, particularly as contained in a letter from General Halleck on the state of affairs in Missouri; of the want of co-operation between Generals Halleck and Buell; but, more than all, the sickness of General McClellan.

"The President said that he was in great distress, and as he had been to General McClellan's house and the general did not ask to see him, and as he must talk to somebody, he had sent for General Franklin and myself to obtain our opinion as to the possibility of soon commencing active operations with the Army of the Potomac.

"To use his own expression, 'If something was not soon done, the bottom would be out of the whole affair; and if General McClellan did not want to use the army, he would like to *borrow it*, provided he could see how it could be made to do something.'" *

General McDowell, in answer to the President's question as to what could be done with the army, outlined the plan which seemed to him best at this time. Substantially it was to organize the army into four corps, place three of these at the front—the right in the vicinity of Vienna, the center beyond Fairfax Court House, and the left beyond Fairfax Station; the fourth corps, in connection with a force of heavy guns afloat, and supported by the corps on the left of the army, to operate on the enemy's right flank beyond the Occoquan, get behind the Potomac batteries, take Aquia, and then move against the railroad between Manassas and the Rappahannock. General Franklin, upon being asked if he had ever thought what he would do with this army if he had it, replied that, in

* Swinton, Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 80.

his judgment, what could be spared from the duty of protecting the capital should be taken to the York River to operate on Richmond. Thereupon the question of transportation by water for a large part of the army was discussed, the Assistant Secretary of War saying that the means had been fully taxed to provide transportation for twelve thousand men. After some further conversation the President expressed a wish that the two generals would come again on the following night, and in the meanwhile obtain all the necessary information from the staff officers of the army in regard to its actual condition—they having confessed their ignorance in this respect.

The next morning the two generals met at the Treasury building and discussed the question of the operations which seemed to them best under existing circumstances. McDowell argued strongly against the York River project, urging the pressing necessity of time, and insisting that the war was now one of positions until they could penetrate the line of the enemy. "The first thing to be done," he said, "was to overcome this army in our front, which is beleaguering our capital, blockading the river, and covering us day by day with the reproach of impotence, and lowering us in the eyes of foreign nations and our people both North and South; and that nothing but what is necessary for this purpose should go elsewhere." General Franklin, on the other hand, leaned toward the York River plan, and it seems to be evident that the main features of this plan had been confided to him by General McClellan. He suggested, in view of the importance of their investigation, that Secretary Chase might be at liberty to tell them the destination of Burnside's expedition, then on the eve of departure. McDowell went and asked him. The Secretary said that under the circumstances he felt that he ought to tell them, and said: "It was destined for Newbern, N. C., by way of Hatteras Inlet and Pamlico Sound, to operate on Raleigh or Beaufort, or either of them. That General McClellan had, by direction of the President, ac-

quainted him with his own plan, which was to go with a large force of this Army of the Potomac to Urbana or Tappahannock, on the Rappahannock, and then with his bridge train move directly to Richmond."

Franklin also raised the question as to whether, in deference to General McClellan, the latter should not be informed of the duty they were ordered to perform; but McDowell held that, as the order under which they were working was marked private and confidential and came directly from the President, their Commander in Chief, it was for the President to do this, and not for them; and in this opinion he was supported by Secretary Chase, whom he consulted as to the rule of the Cabinet in such cases.

Having obtained all the information desired from the chiefs of the Ordnance, Commissary, and Quartermaster Departments of the Army of the Potomac, the two generals prepared a paper containing their views, both agreeing, "in view of time, etc., required to take this army to another base, that operations could best now be undertaken from the present base substantially as proposed." This paper was read to the same high officials as were present at the previous meeting, with the addition of Postmaster-General Blair, who came in after the discussion had commenced. The latter was a strong friend of McClellan and immediately opposed the plan presented in the paper, Mr. Chase defending it, and Mr. Seward expressing his belief that a victory anywhere would answer. After considerable discussion the meeting was adjourned by the President; after directing the two generals to consult with Quartermaster-General Meigs on the question of providing water transportation, it was understood that another meeting would be held the next day at three o'clock. But on this Sunday morning General McClellan had mustered strength enough to be driven to the White House, and took advantage of the occasion to explain to the President in a general and casual way what his intentions were. He made no allusion to show that he was acquainted with what had

occurred nor was anything said to him on the subject, but before he left he was informed that there was to be a meeting at the White House the next day, and was invited to be present. At the Sunday afternoon meeting General Meigs attended with McDowell and Franklin, and stated that water transportation for thirty thousand men could be assembled in a month or six weeks. The general subject of operations from the present base was again discussed, and the drift of the conversation that ensued touched upon the propriety of moving the army farther south, with a suggestion to the President that Burnside's expedition be recalled and brought up to Aquia; but the latter declined to interfere, as it was on the point of striking. Nothing was done at this meeting, as the President stated that General McClellan had been out to see him, that he seemed to be able to assume charge of the army, and that all further proceedings on the part of the two generals would be dropped. A meeting was arranged for the next day, when General McClellan was to be present and again discuss the question of the movement of the army.

The next day there were present all the elements necessary to make the situation exceedingly dramatic. The convalescent general, who had been warned by Mr. Stanton: "They are counting on your death, and are already dividing among themselves your military goods and chattels"; the harassed President, anxiously and honestly seeking a solution of the perplexing military problem; two generals, junior to the general in chief and subject to his command, practically on the defensive, presenting a plan of campaign in opposition to his own; Secretaries Seward, Chase, and Blair, the former nonpartisan and imperturbable, and the other two on opposite sides; these with the Assistant Secretary of War and General Meigs constituted the actors and audience. McDowell's account of this meeting naturally displays less personal feeling than does that of McClellan. The former says:

"The President, pointing to a map, asked me to go

over the plan I had before spoken to him of. He at the same time made a brief explanation of how he came to bring General Franklin and General McDowell before him. I mentioned in as brief terms as possible what General Franklin and I had done under the President's order, what our investigations had been directed upon, and what were our conclusions as to going to the front from our present base, in the way I have heretofore stated, referring also to a transfer of a part of the army to another base farther south. That we had been informed that the latter movement could not be commenced under a month to six weeks, and that a movement to the front could be undertaken in all of three weeks. General Franklin dissented only as to the time I mentioned for beginning operations in the front, not thinking we could get the roads in order by that time. I added, *commence* operations in all of three weeks, to which he assented. I concluded my remarks by saying something apologetic in explanation of the position in which we were; to which General McClellan replied, somewhat coldly if not curtly, 'You are entitled to have any opinion you please.' No discussion was entered into by him whatever, the above being the only remark he made. General Franklin said that, in giving his opinion as to York River, he did it knowing that it was in the direction of General McClellan's plan. I said that I acted entirely in the dark. General Meigs spoke of his agency in having us called in by the President. The President then asked what and when anything could be done, again going over somewhat the same ground he had done with General Franklin and myself. General McClellan said the case was so clear a blind man could see it, and then spoke of the difficulty of ascertaining what force he could count upon; that he did not know whether he could let General Butler go to Ship Island, or whether he could re-enforce Burnside. Much conversation ensued, of rather a general character, as to the discrepancy between the number of men paid for and the number effective. The Secretary of the Treasury then

put a direct question to General McClellan to the effect as to what he intended doing with his army, and when he intended doing it? After a long silence, General McClellan answered that the movement in Kentucky was to precede any one from this place, and that that movement might now be forced; that he had directed General Buell if he could not hire wagons for his transportation, that he must take them. After another pause he said he must say he was very unwilling to develop his plans, always believing that in military matters the fewer persons who were knowing to them the better; that he would tell them if he was ordered to do so. The President then asked him if he counted upon any particular time; he did not ask what that time was, but had he in his own mind any particular time fixed when a movement could be commenced? He replied he had. Then, rejoined the President, I will adjourn this meeting."

A part of McClellan's narrative of what occurred at this meeting suffices to complete the picture. He says:

"I sat by Secretary Blair and General Meigs, and entered into conversation with them upon topics of general interest having no possible bearing upon any subject that could be brought before the meeting. Meanwhile there was a good deal of whispering among the others, in which I do not think Franklin took any special part. Finally McDowell said he wished to explain to me the part he had in the examination, which had commenced, into the state of the army.

"Exactly what he said has escaped my memory, except that he disclaimed any purpose hostile to me, and based what had been done on the ground of the supposed critical nature of my illness. I stopped the explanation by saying that as I was now again restored to health the case had changed, and that, as the examination must now cease, further explanations were unnecessary. Franklin then said a few words clearing himself of any improper motives, which was needless, as I could not suspect him of anything wrong. I

then quietly resumed my conversation with Blair and Meigs, awaiting further developments.

"The whispering then recommenced, especially between the President and Secretary Chase; when at length the latter [Chase] spoke aloud, for the benefit of all assembled, in a very excited tone and manner, saying that he understood the purpose of the meeting to be that General McClellan should then and there explain his military plans in detail, that they might be submitted to the approval or disapproval of the gentlemen present. The uncalled-for violence of his manner surprised me, but I determined to avail myself of it by keeping perfectly cool myself, and contented myself with remarking—what was entirely true—that the purpose he expressed was entirely new to me; that I did not recognize the Secretary of the Treasury as in any manner my official superior, and that I denied his right to question me upon the military affairs committed to my charge; that in the President and Secretary of War alone did I recognize the right to interrogate me. I then quietly resumed my conversation with Blair and Meigs, taking no further notice of Mr. Chase.

"After I had thus disposed of the Secretary of the Treasury he resumed his whispering with the President, who, after the lapse of some minutes, said: 'Well, General McClellan, I think you had better tell us what your plans are,' or words to that effect.

"To this I replied in substance, that if the President had confidence in me it was not right or necessary to intrust my designs to the judgment of others, but that if his confidence was so slight as to require my opinions to be fortified by those of other persons, it would be wiser to replace me by some one fully possessing his confidence; that no general commanding an army would willingly submit his plans to the judgment of such an assembly, in which some were incompetent to form a valuable opinion, and others incapable of keeping a secret, so that anything made known to them would soon spread over Washington

and become known to the enemy. I also reminded the President that he and the Secretary of the Treasury knew in general terms what my designs were. Finally, I declined giving any further information to the meeting unless the President gave me the order in writing and assumed the responsibility of the results.

"This was probably an unexpected *dénouement*. The President was not willing to assume the responsibility, and after a little more whispering between him and Mr. Chase, Mr. Seward arose, buttoned his coat, and laughingly said, 'Well, Mr. President, I think the meeting had better break up. I don't see that we are likely to make much out of General McClellan.' With that the meeting adjourned. I do not think that Mr. Seward took any special part in the affair, and believe that he was on my side. Mr. Chase still continued his whispered conversation with the President. I waited until that ceased, then walked up to the President, begged him not to allow himself to be acted upon by improper influences, but still trust me, and said that if he would leave military affairs to me I would be responsible; that I would bring matters to a successful issue and free him from all his troubles." *

It must be confessed that McClellan's position was not strengthened by what had occurred at this interview. He had not re-established himself in the full confidence of the Executive; Mr. Seward was noncommittal and diplomatic; Mr. Chase was decidedly in opposition, and Mr. Blair was alone actively his supporter. His own demeanor in treating with scant courtesy the project of the two generals, which he knew was practically the President's plan, was an act of temerity that could be justified only by an unimpaired confidence in the strength of his position or a determination to face the issue of his responsibility as general in chief. From this time on the lines were clearly drawn between those who defended and those who

* McClellan's Own Story, p. 156 *et seq.*

opposed him. Many men of influence in the councils of the nation publicly assailed him, vigorously denounced his lethargy and incapacity, and some even went so far as to question the purity of his motives by expressing doubts of his loyalty.

CHAPTER VIII.

PRESIDENT'S WAR ORDERS.—PENINSULAR PLAN ADOPTED.—ASSISTANCE OF THE NAVY.

On the very day of this conference the new Secretary of War, Mr. Stanton, entered upon the administration of the War Department, and it was not long before its organization exhibited a new spirit and a more active vitality. McClellan's hitherto predominating influence at the War Department perceptibly waned, and he was soon made to experience in his personal and official intercourse that the tone had changed from the hearty welcome of the personal friend to the masterful accentuation of the official superior. Very soon after Secretary Stanton had entered upon the duties of his office General McClellan orally laid before him his plan of campaign by the lower Chesapeake, and was thereupon directed to submit it to the President. The latter at once disapproved it, and shortly afterward, of his own volition, and, it is said, without consulting either his Cabinet or the general in chief, issued, January 27th, General War Order No. 1, as follows:

"Ordered, that the 22d day of February, 1862, be the day for a general movement of the land and naval forces of the United States against the insurgent forces. That especially the army at and about Fortress Monroe, the Army of the Potomac, the Army of Western Virginia, the army near Munfordville, Ky., the army and flotilla at Cairo, and the naval force in the Gulf of Mexico, be ready to move on that day.

"That all other forces, both land and naval, with their respective commanders, obey existing orders for

the time, and be ready to obey additional orders when duly given.

"That the heads of departments, and especially the Secretaries of War and of the Navy, with all their subordinates, and the general in chief with all other commanders and subordinates of land and naval forces, will severally be held to their strict and full responsibilities for prompt execution of this order." *

This was followed by the President's Special War Order No. 1, January 31st, outlining the plan of campaign that he had adopted for the Army of the Potomac:

"Ordered, That all the disposable force of the Army of the Potomac, after providing safely for the defense of Washington, be formed into an expedition for the immediate object of seizing and occupying a point upon the railroad southwestward of what is known as Manassas Junction, all details to be in the discretion of the commander in chief, and the expedition to move before or on the 22d day of February next." †

Notwithstanding the explicit language of these orders and the high authority which promulgated them, McClellan inquired of the President whether the special order relating to the Army of the Potomac was to be regarded as final, or whether he might be permitted to submit in writing his objections to the plan proposed and his reasons for preferring his own. Permission having been granted, McClellan submitted to the Secretary of War, February 3d, a long letter, which, while it did not convince the President, had a most important influence upon the events that followed in practically nullifying the special war order of the President.

He begins his letter with a review of the critical condition of the army and the capital when he took command, July 27th, and the measures he adopted for

* Official War Records, vol. v, p. 41. † Ibid.

the security of the latter and for the organization, drill, and discipline of the troops. He contrasts the present security with the past dangers, and asserts that he now has a well-drilled and reliable army, animated by the highest spirit and capable of great deeds. He displays his insistent habit of mind by referring to his earlier papers wherein he had asked for an effective and movable force far exceeding that now on the banks of the Potomac, and calls attention to the fact that he has not now the force he asked for. He confesses that he had always looked beyond the operations of the single Army of the Potomac, even when in a subordinate position, for the prospects of a barren victory had never been satisfactory to him (and in this we see the same traits that impelled him to submit plans of campaign to General Scott very soon after he had been assigned to the command of the Ohio militia). So that when he was placed in command of all the armies of the United States he immediately turned his attention to the whole field of operations, and not till then was he aware of the absence of any general plan nor of the utter disorganization and want of preparation that he found to pervade the Western armies, and in this respect he acknowledges he made a great mistake. To remedy this grave defect he sent, with the approval of the Executive, competent generals to command in Kentucky and Missouri, with instructions looking to a prompt forward movement, but time was required to create and organize these armies and supply them with arms, clothing, artillery, and transportation. He had then hoped that a general advance could have been made during the good weather of December, but notwithstanding the commendable work of his generals this was found not to be possible, and he acknowledges that he was disappointed in his hope. Defining the true policy of the war to be to make full preparation, and then by striking at the heart to seek the most decisive results, he says that it was his wish to gain possession of the East Tennessee Railroad as a preliminary movement, and to follow it up by

a nearly simultaneous attack on Nashville and Richmond.*

So far his letter may be regarded as an apologetic vindication of the six months' delay of the armies of the Union, submitted as a necessary prelude to an analysis of the two plans of campaign—the principal purpose of his letter. Of these he says:

"Two bases of operation seem to present themselves for the advance of the Army of the Potomac:

"I. That of Washington—its present position—involving a direct attack upon the intrenched positions of the enemy at Centreville, Manassas, etc., or else a movement to turn one or both flanks of those positions, or a combination of the two plans.

"The relative force of the two armies will not justify an attack on both flanks; an attack on his left flank alone involves a long line of wagon communication, and can not prevent him from collecting for the decisive battle all the detachments now on his extreme right and left.

"Should we attack his right flank by the line of the Occoquan, and a crossing of the Potomac below that river and near his batteries, we could, perhaps, prevent the junction of the enemy's right with his center (we might destroy the former); we would remove the obstructions to the navigation of the Potomac, reduce the length of wagon transportation by establishing new depots at the nearest points of the Potomac, and strike more directly his main railway communications." †

Having thus eliminated the attacks upon the right and center, he then proceeds to point out the difficulties attending the movement against the enemy's left flank. These are in substance that the fords of the Occoquan are watched, batteries placed in their rear, and troops arranged to oppose a considerable resistance to a passage of that stream; that the enemy, he is informed, is intrenching a line from Union Mills toward Evans-

* Official War Records, vol. v, p. 42 *et seq.* † Ibid., p. 43.

port; Spriggs's Ford held by thirty-six hundred men and eight guns, and Davis's Ford reported occupied. That, while our columns can reach the Accotink without danger, our right thence to the Occoquan would be exposed to an attack from Fairfax Station, Sangster's, and Union Mills, which, however, could be met by occupying with some force the junction of the roads leading from these points and held so long as supplies are drawn from Washington or until a battle is won. Having gained the Occoquan, a column must be thrown on Dumfries to force the enemy to abandon the Potomac batteries, and to cover our left from a possible attack from Aquia and to establish our communications with the river. By this time, he thinks, the enemy would occupy the line of the Occoquan above Bull Run, holding Brentsville in force and perhaps extending southward. Then, to prevent the enemy from crossing the Occoquan between Broad and Bull Runs to attack our right, we might either occupy Bacon Race Church, or more effectually by moving to the fords themselves. Having secured our right flank it would become necessary to carry Brentsville at any cost, and the final movement on the railroad must then depend on existing circumstances.

This brief sketch of the possible progress of an attack on the enemy's left flank brings out in bold relief, he thinks, the great advantage possessed by the enemy in occupying a strong central position of defense, having roads radiating in all directions, and thus enabling him to concentrate for a decisive action while maintaining the defensive at either flank with a small force. He regards it as next to impossible to surprise the enemy or take him at a disadvantage by rapid maneuvers, owing to the uncertainty of the weather and consequent badness of the roads, and that our slow progress will enable him to divine our purpose and take precautionary measures. His information leads him to believe that the enemy has improved the roads leading to his lines of defense, while we will have

to work as we advance. Summarizing his objections, he says:

"Bearing in mind what has been said, and the present unprecedented and impassable condition of the roads, it will be evident that no precise period can be fixed upon for the movement on this line, nor can its duration be closely calculated; it seems certain that many weeks may elapse before it is possible to commence the march. Assuming the success of this operation, and the defeat of the enemy as certain, the question at once arises as to the importance of the results gained. I think these results would be confined to the possession of the field of battle, the evacuation of the line of the upper Potomac by the enemy, and the moral effect of the victory—important results, it is true, but not decisive of the war nor securing the destruction of the enemy's main army; for he could fall back upon other positions and fight us again and again, should the condition of his troops permit. If he is in no condition to fight us again out of the range of the intrenchments at Richmond, we would find it a very difficult and tedious matter to follow him up there, for he would destroy his railroad bridges and otherwise impede our progress through a region where the roads are as bad as they well can be, and we would probably find ourselves forced at last to change the whole theater of war, or to seek a shorter land route to Richmond, with a smaller available force, and at an expenditure of much more time than were we to adopt the short line at once. We would also have forced the enemy to concentrate his force and perfect his defensive measures at the very points where it is desirable to strike him when least prepared.

"II. The second base of operations available for the Army of the Potomac is that of the lower Chesapeake Bay, which affords the shortest possible land route to Richmond, and strikes directly at the heart of the enemy's power in the East.

"The roads in that region are passable at all seasons of the year. The country now alluded to is much

more favorable for offensive operations than that in front of Washington (which is very unfavorable), much more level, more cleared land, the woods less dense, the soil more sandy, and the spring some two or three weeks earlier. A movement in force on that line obliges the enemy to abandon his intrenched position at Manassas, in order to hasten to cover Richmond and Norfolk. He must do this; for should he permit us to occupy Richmond, his destruction can be averted only by entirely defeating us in battle, in which he must be the assailant. This movement, if successful, gives us the capital, the communications, the supplies of the rebels, Norfolk would fall, all the waters of the Chesapeake would be ours, all Virginia would be in our power, and the enemy forced to abandon Tennessee and North Carolina. The alternative presented to the enemy would be to beat us in a position selected by ourselves, disperse, or pass beneath the Caudine Forks.

"Should we be beaten in battle, we have a perfectly secure retreat down the Peninsula upon Fort Monroe, with our flanks perfectly covered by the fleet. During the whole movement our left flank is covered by water. Our right is secure, for the reason that the enemy is too distant to reach us in time. He can only oppose us in front. We bring our fleet into full play.

"After a successful battle our position would be: Burnside forming our left, Norfolk held securely; our center connecting Burnside with Buell, both by Raleigh and Lynchburg; Buell in Eastern Tennessee and North Alabama; Halleck at Nashville and Memphis. The next movement would be to connect with Sherman on the left, by reducing Wilmington and Charleston; to advance our center into South Carolina and Georgia; to push Buell either toward Montgomery or to unite with the main army in Georgia; to throw Halleck southward to meet the naval expedition from New Orleans. We should then be in a condition to reduce at our leisure all the Southern seaports; to occupy all the avenues of communication; to use the great outlet of the Mississippi; to re-establish our Government and

arms in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas; to force the slaves to labor for our subsistence instead of that of the rebels; to bid defiance to all foreign interference. Such is the object I have ever had in view; this is the general plan which I hope to accomplish.

"For many long months I have labored to prepare the Army of the Potomac to play its part in the programme. From the day when I was placed in command of all our armies I have exerted myself to place all the other armies in such a condition that they, too, could perform their allotted duties.

"Should it be determined to operate from the lower Chesapeake, the point of landing which promises the most brilliant result is Urbana, on the lower Rappahannock. This point is easily reached by vessels of heavy draught; it is neither occupied nor observed by the enemy; it is but one march from West Point, the key of that region, and thence but two marches to Richmond. A rapid movement from Urbana would probably cut off Magruder in the Peninsula, and enable us to occupy Richmond before it could be strongly re-enforced. Should we fail in that, we could, with the co-operation of the navy, cross the James and throw ourselves in the rear of Richmond, thus forcing the enemy to come out and attack us, for his position would be untenable with us on the southern bank of the river. Should circumstances render it not advisable to land at Urbana, we can use Mob Jack Bay; or, the worst coming to the worst, we can take Fort Monroe as a base, and operate with complete security, although with less celerity and brilliancy of results, up the Peninsula.

"To reach whatever point may be selected as a base a large amount of cheap water transportation must be collected, consisting mainly of canal boats, barges, wood boats, schooners, etc., towed by small steamers, all of a very different character from those required for all previous expeditions. This can certainly be accomplished within thirty days from the time the order is given. I propose, as the best possible

plan that can, in my judgment, be adopted, to select Urbana as a landing place for the first detachments; to transport by water four divisions of infantry with their batteries, the regular infantry, a few wagons, one bridge train, and a few squadrons of cavalry, making the vicinity of Hooker's position the place of embarkation for as many as possible; to move the regular cavalry and reserve artillery, the remaining bridge trains and wagons, to a point somewhere near Cape Lookout; then ferry them over the river by means of North River ferryboats, march them over to the Rappahannock (covering the movement by an infantry force near Heathsville), and to cross the Rappahannock in a similar way. The expense and difficulty of the movement will then be very much diminished (a saving of transportation of about ten thousand horses), and the result none the less certain.

"The concentration of the cavalry, etc., on the lower counties of Maryland can be effected without exciting suspicion, and the movement made without delay from that cause.

"This movement, if adopted, will not at all expose the city of Washington to danger.

"The total force to be thrown upon the new line would be, according to circumstances, from one hundred and ten thousand to one hundred and forty thousand. I hope to use the latter number by bringing fresh troops into Washington, and still leaving it quite safe. I fully realize that in all projects offered time will probably be the most valuable consideration. It is my decided opinion that, in that point of view, the second plan should be adopted. It is possible—nay, highly probable—that the weather and state of the roads may be such as to delay the direct movement from Washington, with its unsatisfactory results and great risks, far beyond the time required to complete the second plan. In the first case we can fix no definite time for an advance. The roads have gone from bad to worse. Nothing like their present condition was ever known here before; they are impassable at pres-

ent. We are entirely at the mercy of the weather. It is by no means certain that we can beat them at Manassas. On the other line I regard success as certain by all the chances of war. We demoralize the enemy by forcing him to abandon his prepared position for one which we have chosen, in which all is in our favor, and where success must produce immense results.

"My judgment as a general is clearly in favor of this project. Nothing is certain in war, but all the chances are in favor of this movement. So much am I in favor of the southern line of operations, that I would prefer the move from Fortress Monroe as a base as a certain though less brilliant movement than that from Urbana to an attack upon Manassas.

"I know that his Excellency the President, you, and I, all agree in our wishes, and that these wishes are to bring this war to a close as promptly as the means in our possession will permit. I believe that the mass of the people have entire confidence in us. I am sure of it. Let us then look only to the great result to be accomplished and disregard everything else." *

On the same date as this letter the President had also sent to General McClellan the following note:

MY DEAR SIR: You and I have distinct and different plans for a movement of the Army of the Potomac—yours to be down the Chesapeake, up the Rappahannock to Urbana, and across land to the terminus of the railroad on York River; mine to move directly to a point on the railroads southwest of Manassas.

If you will give me satisfactory answers to the following questions I shall gladly yield my plan to yours:

1. Does not your plan involve a greatly larger expenditure of *time* and *money* than mine?

2. Wherein is a victory *more certain* by your plan than mine?

3. Wherein is a victory *more valuable* by your plan than mine?

4. In fact, would it not be *less* valuable in this, that it would break no great line of the enemy's communications, while mine would?

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* Official War Records, vol. v, p. 44 *et seq.*

5. In case of disaster, would not a retreat be more difficult by your plan than mine?*

That the answers to these questions which were embodied in General McClellan's letter were not satisfactory to the President is apparent from the fact that he did not formally suspend his order nor willingly yield his preference. Many conferences ensued, and the President found the situation exceedingly embarrassing. Whether it were better to supersede McClellan and to confide the execution of his own plan of campaign to an unknown and untried general, or to insist that McClellan, however unwilling and distrustful of its results, should conduct it, or, against the strongest influences of his political advisers and his own innate convictions, yield his own plan to that of McClellan, were the momentous questions that overburdened him with their tremendous importance. Subjected at this time to much distress of mind, there were many causes in operation that served to weaken his determination and undermine his judgment, until he finally felt himself compelled to commit his administration to the adoption of McClellan's plan of campaign by the lower Chesapeake.

While no definite decision was reached with regard to the line of operations, investigations were being carried on with reference to the possibility of transporting a large force by water. General McClellan believed that an army of fifty thousand troops, ten thousand horses, one thousand wagons, thirteen batteries of artillery, together with the necessary impedimenta of such an army, could be transported on smooth water at one time, although acknowledged experts in logistics believed it impracticable with the means then available to the Government. Unless this could be done the plan advocated by McClellan would have to be abandoned even by himself. As early as January 17th the problem was submitted to Mr. John Tucker, who

* Official War Records, vol. v, p. 41.

after a few days' study confirmed McClellan's opinion, and shortly afterward demonstrated its feasibility to the President, but stated that it would require thirty days' preparation before such an expedition could start. With characteristic persistency McClellan, with this showing as an ally, labored to overcome the President's objections to his plan, and finally succeeded on February 14th in having the War Department, by public advertisement, authorize proposals for furnishing the necessary transports, and eventually the movement by the lower Chesapeake was decided upon, February 27th; the Assistant Secretary of War, Mr. Tucker, was thereupon directed to collect the necessary water transportation with all possible dispatch.

McClellan had gained his point, but at a great cost. He had almost bankrupted the confidence of those upon whom he must needs rely for material assistance in a critical emergency at a time when no real emergency existed. Had he yielded to the strongly expressed desire of the Executive and hurled his army against the enemy's left flank on the Occoquan, we now know that victory would have been certain and decisive; and whatever the result might have been on the field of battle, he would have strengthened the Administration at a most opportune time, gained its support for his own plan afterward, and destroyed all the discordant elements that were then gathering strength in Washington to overthrow him.

When great events are happening that excite the passions of the people it is scarcely possible to form a just judgment of the great leaders whom the circumstances of the times have forced to the front. The period of hero-worship must needs pass away in order that the critical spirit of inquiry may search without bias the fullest records of history, and thus arrive at a conclusion that satisfies the reason and compels the assent of the judgment. During his active career McClellan was subjected, in a greater degree than any other of the more prominent commanders, to unmerited abuse and undeserved encomium, which may

with propriety be accredited to his rapid advancement and the unfamiliarity of the people with the military necessities of actual war. One of his most prominent claims for generalship is based upon the strategical conception of the Urbana plan of campaign as outlined in the letter already quoted.

The essence of every strategical operation is to reach the strategic point sooner and with stronger effective force than the enemy; or, as General Forrest has pithily put it, "To get there first with the most men." In considering McClellan's plan it is exceedingly difficult to ascertain with certainty what he actually believed the strength of the enemy in his front to be. In his letter to the Secretary of War, written in the latter part of October, he says: "As you are aware, all the information we have from spies, prisoners, etc., agrees in showing that the enemy have a force on the Potomac not less than one hundred and fifty thousand strong, well drilled and equipped, ably commanded, and strongly intrenched." But the Comte de Paris, one of his staff, specially charged with these matters, submitted, February 21st, as his estimate, seventy thousand on the Potomac and twelve thousand to eighteen thousand in the valley under Jackson. Later, on March 8th, McClellan's chief of the secret-service corps submits an estimate of one hundred and two thousand and five hundred Confederate troops on the Potomac, to which McClellan adds that they also had three hundred field guns and from twenty to thirty-six guns in front of Washington. A still wider discrepancy occurs in the estimate furnished March 2d to a council of war called together to propose and prepare the details of a plan for opening the lower Potomac. On the map furnished to this council from the Headquarters of the Army the probable positions and numerical strength of the Confederate forces were laid down, showing an aggregate strength on the Potomac of fifty thousand and five hundred men. Assuming that he accepted the greater estimate of one hundred and fifty thousand, the Urbana plan was certainly untenable, for by withdraw-

ing the bulk of his army from in front of Washington he at once gave the Confederates an immense strategical advantage. If he believed the smallest estimate to be true, he had already a splendid strategical position with Washington as a base, without the necessity of seeking another more difficult to attain and with regard to which his information was neither specific nor reliable. A careful study of his letter gives the strong impression that his imagination and hopeful anticipations were having full sway in his mind, for the essential facts with which the reason deals nowhere appear to be presented. Upon the soundness of his strategy there has been a wide difference of opinion, but the military student in reaching a conclusion upon this point must take into consideration not the facts as they were, but as McClellan conceived them to be. He must also remember that Congress was then in session, many of whose master minds were in full accord with the President, and who, in addition, were embittered against the general in chief for his long inactivity, and now feared lest he should leave the capital an easy prey to the watchful enemy; that some of the most influential members of the Cabinet had lost confidence in the head of the army and were seeking to supplant him; that the Committee on the Conduct of the War was casting discredit upon him and undermining his influence in the suggestions and doubts promulgated during the examination of his subordinates; and that he had as yet done nothing to warrant a belief that he could handle with success so great an army actively in the field. In addition to these not more than two of his division commanders had been informed of his contemplated movement, and the others felt themselves aggrieved in being excluded from his confidence; all were, however, loyal to his leadership and ready to do their very best whenever the order from their commander should set them in motion.

Meanwhile the President was decided in his purpose to clear the Potomac from the control of the Confederate batteries as a necessary preliminary before he

would give his consent to the transfer of the bulk of the Army of the Potomac from in front of Washington. General Hooker, whose division was stationed on the eastern shore of Maryland, submitted a plan to the general in chief, January 27th, to destroy these batteries by embarking a force of four thousand men, supported by the flotilla from Liverpool Point, and suggested making the assault in two columns. Matters had indeed progressed so far that the barges had been collected and preparations were sufficiently completed by the 23d of February, so that he was awaiting a favorable day and final instructions. But General Barnard strongly advised against such an enterprise, in view of the great risk of failure and as involving preparations for the forcing of a very strong line of the enemy's defensive position equivalent to those for a general movement of the army, and McClellan, February 27th, very wisely revoked Hooker's authority to proceed with the movement. It was seen shortly after the evacuation that had Hooker been permitted to attempt this enterprise with so small a force he would have had scarcely any chance of success, as "the defensive works of the rebels in and around the batteries were stupendous."

Washington was, indeed, at this time almost in the condition of a beleaguered city, for in addition to the blockade of the Potomac, the important line of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was still interrupted. The Administration felt this condition very keenly, and considerable pressure was brought to bear upon McClellan to do something to remedy it. While he regarded the opening of the railway as exceedingly desirable, he did not deem it of such vital importance as to undertake it until he felt prepared to fight a battle that would give him possession of Winchester and Strasburg as a necessary cover for its secure protection. By the middle of February, however, matters had reached such a condition that he felt that he could assure the President that he might look forward to a brilliant and successful movement, so certain was he

that nothing could happen to disappoint him. He referred to the opening of this line of railway. Early in December Lieutenant Babcock, of the Engineers, in submitting a report upon the facilities of crossing troops at Harper's Ferry, had suggested the construction of a bridge supported upon canal boats, stating that "the boats can be locked into the river and anchored in their places immediately." This officer repeated his recommendation December 26th, and said: "The lift-lock at Sandy Hook is in good order. . . . Such a bridge can be constructed in a short time, and be made very stable and serviceable for all purposes." McClellan saw at once that with the rapid construction of what would be practically a semi-permanent bridge, together with several pontoon bridges as adjuncts, he would be able to throw over into Virginia at that place a considerable force much superior to that which the enemy could bring against him and be certain of his line of supply. He therefore directed Keyes's division to be held in readiness to march at a moment's notice, and this, with Sedgwick's and two brigades of Banks's division, would enable him to occupy Winchester with certainty. But it happened that this plan was destined to fail because one very minute precaution had not been taken. When McClellan had arranged this movement it was to be presumed that his engineer had prepared for every contingency; but when it was attempted to pass the boats into the lift-lock to lower them into the river it was found that the lock was too narrow by some four to six inches, it having been constructed for the boats used on the Shenandoah, and not for the wider boats of the Potomac canal. The difference in size was too small to be detected by the eye and no one had thought of making exact measurements. As it would be too hazardous to rely upon the ordinary pontoon bridges, subject as they were to sudden destruction by freshets, for the supply of a large force, the movement of Keyes's troops was countermanded and the contemplated plan had to be abandoned.

The failure of this movement came very near pro-

ducing a fatal rupture between the President and his general in chief. Up to this time, while Mr. Lincoln had defended him in public, he had in private constantly urged him to speedy action, to do something to relieve the public tension which the long inactivity of the Army of the Potomac had stretched almost to the breaking point. And now that the movement, which McClellan had so confidently assured him was certain to be successful, had failed so lamentably, he seemed to have lost all confidence not only in his promises but in his capacity as well. The adverse criticisms against him increased daily in volume and in virulence and the President was forced to give ear to much that was said by prominent men who undoubtedly believed that they were doing the country a service in endeavoring to have McClellan superseded by a more aggressive leader. Early on the morning of the 8th of March the President sent for him, and after referring to his great disappointment with regard to the outcome of the Harper's Ferry affair, he manifested his displeasure that the general had vouchsafed no explanation to him in respect to the causes of the failure. McClellan was astonished, and said that he had submitted a memorandum to the Secretary of War immediately upon his return to Washington, in which he had given a full explanation of the causes why the expedition, on the scale upon which he had originally planned it, had not succeeded, and that he had in addition made a full oral report to the Secretary of all the circumstances connected with it; that he had also at the same time expressed his desire to make his explanation personally to the President, but that the Secretary had replied that the President now understood the whole affair and a personal interview was unnecessary, and that he would himself hand McClellan's memorandum to the President. Upon this presentation of the matter the President expressed great surprise, and repeated that he had never heard of any explanation as coming from General McClellan, nor had he seen the memorandum referred to, but was now perfectly satisfied.

This difference having been adjusted, the President then said that there was a very "ugly matter" to which he must refer. He said that it had been represented to him that McClellan's plan of campaign was conceived with the traitorous intent of removing its defenders from Washington, and thus giving over to the enemy the capital and the Government by leaving them defenseless. He concluded with the remark that it did look to him much like treason. McClellan was justly indignant and demanded an immediate retraction of the offensive expression, telling the President that "he could permit no one to couple the word treason with his name." The latter displayed much agitation and at once disclaimed any idea of regarding McClellan as a traitor, and said that he had merely repeated what others had said. "I suggested caution in the use of language," says McClellan, whose account of the interview is here quoted, "and again said that I would permit no doubt to be thrown upon my intentions; whereupon he again apologized, and disclaimed any purpose of impugning my motives." * The interview was terminated by the acceptance of the general's suggestion that he should lay his plan of campaign before a council of war appointed to meet that day at army headquarters, and which had been called by General McClellan to consider a proposed attack on the enemy's Potomac batteries.

The condition of things as revealed by this interview was exceedingly unsatisfactory. McClellan felt that he was discredited in the mind of the Executive at a time when he needed not only all the support that the Government could give, but the full faith and personal confidence of the President himself. It was incumbent upon him to do something speedily, and he looked with hope to the action of the council of war to restore the harmony between himself and the Administration by the recommendation of a plan of campaign supported by the ablest of his military com-

* McClellan's Own Story, p. 195.

manders. From this state of affairs the Peninsular campaign was eventually evolved, and the steps of its evolution were substantially as follows.

The council of war convened at McClellan's headquarters, March 8th, consisted of Generals Blenker, Casey, Heintzelman, Keyes, McCall, McDowell, Andrew Porter, Fitz-John Porter, W. F. Smith, and Sumner, generals commanding divisions of the army; Naglee, commanding a brigade in Hooker's division, representing the latter, who was sick; and Barnard, the chief engineer of the army. By a majority vote of eight to four the council voted for the plan that McClellan had advocated in his letter to the Secretary, February 3d—that is, a movement by the lower Chesapeake from Urbana as a base of operations. Those who voted in opposition were McDowell, Sumner, Heintzelman, and Barnard. There appears to be no official record of the proceedings of this council, but we may reasonably infer from the testimony of General Barnard that no matured plan, but merely the general features of the movement to the lower Chesapeake, was presented to the council, and that this was decided upon without deliberation or discussion. Barnard says: "I had no other intimation of a serious intention to make such a movement [that is, to the lower Chesapeake] than the casual mention of it to me by General McClellan, in the latter part of November. Not having any reason to suppose that any officer of the council had any more intimate knowledge of the intention than myself, and knowing how much thought the slight intimation I had received had cost me, I naturally expected deliberation and discussion. To my great surprise, eight of the twelve officers present voted off-hand *for* the measure *without* discussion; nor was any argument on my part available to obtain a reconsideration."* With regard to the question whether an attempt should first be made to destroy the enemy's batteries on the Potomac, the council de-

* Barnard's Peninsular Campaign, p. 52.

cided that this was not indispensable as it was understood to be a part of General McClellan's plan to make no movement likely to alarm the enemy in his present position in order that the Army of the Potomac might possess the advantage of the initiative and be able to reach Richmond from the Lower Rappahannock before the enemy could get there from Manassas.

On the same day, March 8th, the President issued General War Orders 2 and 3. The first of these directed the "major general commanding the Army of the Potomac to proceed forthwith to organize that part of the said army destined to enter upon active operations [including the reserve, but excluding the troops to be left in the fortifications about Washington] into four army corps, to be commanded according to seniority of rank," by Generals McDowell, Sumner, Heintzelman, and Keyes; a fifth corps to be commanded by General Banks; the forces left for the defenses of Washington to be commanded by General Wadsworth; and "that this order be executed with such order and dispatch as not to delay the commencement of the operations already directed to be undertaken by the Army of the Potomac." This order indicated that the Administration had determined upon a plan of operations, and this was outlined in General War Order No. 3, March 8th, as follows:

"*Ordered*, That no change in the base of operations of the Army of the Potomac shall be made without leaving in and about Washington such a force as, in the opinion of the general in chief and the commanders of army corps, shall leave said city entirely secure.

"That no more than two army corps [about fifty thousand troops] of said Army of the Potomac shall be moved *en route* for a new base of operations until the navigation of the Potomac from Washington to the Chesapeake Bay shall be freed from the enemy's batteries and other obstructions, or until the President shall hereafter give express permission.

"That any movement as aforesaid, *en route* for a new base of operations, which may be ordered by the general in chief, and which may be intended to move upon the Chesapeake Bay, shall begin to move upon the bay as early as the 18th of March instant, and the general in chief shall be responsible that it moves as early as that day.

"*Ordered*, That the army and navy co-operate in an immediate effort to capture the enemy's batteries upon the Potomac between Washington and the Chesapeake Bay." *

This order definitely committed the Administration to the plan of operations by the Lower Chesapeake and an abandonment of the overland route, which had been practically decided upon by the orders of February 27th, directing the collection of water transportation. The next day, while McClellan was in conference with the President and the Secretary, the astounding news was received that the Confederates had abandoned their lines in front of the Army of the Potomac, and had retired to the Rappahannock line. McClellan immediately hastened across the river to General Fitz-John Porter's headquarters to direct the movements of the army in this unforeseen emergency. While it is probable that there might have been some interchange of opinion in regard to the Urbana plan of campaign in the conference above referred to, there is no official or other record to show that any change was made in its general plan, and it is reasonable to assume, in view of the short time that had elapsed since the promulgation of the order, that no change of base from Urbana to any other was then contemplated.

This conference was doubtless engaged in discussing the disaster wrought by the Merrimac at Hampton Roads, the news of which had reached Washington early on the morning of the 9th of March, for as early as eleven o'clock in the morning of that day McClellan was telegraphing to General Dix at Baltimore to

* Official War Records, vol. v, p. 50.

take certain precautionary measures in case the Merrimac should run by Fort Monroe. So that up to the time of his departure from Washington on the 9th, Urbana was the base agreed upon in the contemplated movement of the army. But when the result of the engagement between the Monitor and Merrimac, and the fact of the latter's withdrawal to Norfolk were made known to McClellan, he began to entertain the thought of taking Fort Monroe as his base of operations. This is evident from his dispatch of the 12th of March to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Fox: "Can I rely on the Monitor to keep the Merrimac in check, so that I can take Fortress Monroe as a base of operations?" Mr. Fox replied, "I can not advise so great dependence to be placed upon her." * But McClellan had more confidence in the superiority of the Monitor, and having experienced a change of mind with respect to the advantages of the rival bases he did not hesitate to throw the weight of his influence to settle the choice upon Fort Monroe.

This point of view is negatived by but one statement occurring in his Own Story, where he says: "The fears of the administration and their inability to comprehend the merits of the scheme, or else the determination that I should not succeed in the approaching campaign, induced them to prohibit me from carrying out the Urbana movement. They gave me the choice between the direct overland route *via* Manassas, and the route with Fort Monroe as a base. Of course I selected the latter. My report gives all the most important correspondence on this subject, and the arguments I used in support of the plan of campaign which commended itself to my judgment." † But an examination of his report furnishes no sufficient warrant for the use of so strong a term as "prohibit" in this connection, while there is abundant evidence to

* McClellan's Own Story, pp. 248, 249; and Official War Records, vol. v, p. 753.

† McClellan's Own Story, p. 227.

show that he was subjected to no restrictions in selecting a base after the President had so reluctantly abandoned his own plan by the overland route.

Turning now to his report we find: "Meanwhile important events were occurring which materially modified the designs for the subsequent campaign. The appearance of the Merrimac off Old Point Comfort, and the encounter with the United States squadron on the 8th of March, threatened serious derangement of the plan for the Peninsular movement. But the engagement between the Monitor and Merrimac on the 9th of March demonstrated so satisfactorily the power of the former, and the other naval preparations were so extensive and formidable that the security of Fort Monroe as a base of operations was placed beyond a doubt, and although the James River was closed to us, the York River with its tributaries was still open as a line of water communication with the fortress. The general plan, therefore, remained undisturbed, although less promising in its details than when the James River was in our control." * Again, in a letter written about the 20th of April to Secretary Stanton, he says: "Circumstances, among which I will now only mention the uncertainty as to the power of the Merrimac, have compelled me to adopt the present line as probably safer, though far less brilliant, than that by Urbana." †

The next step was taken when he convened a council of war to consider the military situation under the provisions of the President's General War Order No. 3, of March 8th, and as affected by the changed condition of affairs that the startling events of the last few days had brought about. It consisted of Generals McDowell, Sumner, Heintzelman, and Keyes, the commanders of the four corps then with the army in the vicinity of Fairfax Court House. Its proceedings are given in the following memorandum:

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* Official War Records, vol. v, p. 50.
† Note to Mr. Fox, March 14.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,
FAIRFAX COURT HOUSE, *March* 13, 1862.

A council of the generals commanding army corps at the headquarters of the Army of the Potomac were of the opinion:

I. That the enemy having retreated from Manassas to Gordonsville, behind the Rappahannock and Rapidan, it is the opinion of the generals commanding army corps that the operations to be carried on will best be undertaken from Old Point Comfort, between the York and James Rivers, provided

1. That the enemy's vessel Merrimac can be neutralized;

2. That the means of transportation sufficient for an immediate transfer of the force to its new base can be ready at Washington and Alexandria to move down the Potomac; and

3. That a naval auxiliary force can be had to silence, or aid in silencing, the enemy's batteries on the York River.

4. That the force to be left to cover Washington shall be such as to give an entire feeling of security for its safety from menace. (Unanimous.)

II. If the foregoing can not be, the army should then be moved against the enemy, behind the Rappahannock, at the earliest possible moment, and the means for reconstructing bridges, repairing railroads, and stocking them with materials sufficient for supplying the army should at once be collected for both the Orange and Alexandria and Aquia and Richmond Railroads. (Unanimous.)

N. B.—That with the forts on the right bank of the Potomac fully garrisoned and those on the left bank occupied, a covering force in front of the Virginia line of twenty-five thousand men would suffice. (Keyes, Heintzelman, and McDowell.) A total of forty thousand men for the defense of the city would suffice. (Sumner.)*

Immediately upon the adjournment of the council General McClellan telegraphed to Secretary Stanton: "The commanders of army corps have unanimously agreed upon a plan of operations. General McDowell will proceed with it to Washington and lay it before you." To this Stanton replied immediately: "Whatever plan has been agreed upon, proceed at once to execute, without losing an hour for any approval." But after the memorandum had been received and considered by the President, the Secretary, on the same day, sent this reply:

* Official War Records, vol. v, p. 55.

"The President having considered the plan of operations agreed upon by yourself and the commanders of army corps, makes no objection to the same, but gives the following directions as to its execution:

"1. Leave such force at Manassas Junction as shall make it entirely certain that the enemy shall not repossess himself of that position and line of communication.

"2. Leave Washington entirely secure.

"3. Move the remainder of the force down the Potomac, choosing a new base at Fortress Monroe, or anywhere between here and there, or, at all events, move such remainder of the army at once in pursuit of the enemy by some route." *

In the meanwhile the following order had been promulgated which practically assigned the duties of general in chief to the Secretary of War, and thus made Mr. Stanton responsible for the general conduct of military operations:

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, *March* 11, 1862.

President's War Order No. 3.

Major-General McClellan having personally taken the field at the head of the Army of the Potomac, until otherwise ordered, he is relieved from the command of the other military departments, he retaining command of the Department of the Potomac.

Ordered further, That the departments now under the respective commands of Generals Halleck and Hunter, together with so much of that under General Buell as lies west of a north and south line indefinitely drawn through Knoxville, Tenn., be consolidated and designated the Department of the Mississippi, and that, until otherwise ordered, Major-General Halleck have command of said department.

Ordered also, That the country west of the Department of the Potomac and east of the Department of the Mississippi be a military department, to be called the Mountain Department, and that the same be commanded by Major-General Frémont.

That all the commanders of departments, after the receipt of this order by them, respectively report severally and di-

* Official War Records, vol. v, p. 56.

rectly to the Secretary of War, and that prompt, full, and frequent reports will be expected of all and each of them.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.*

There appears to be no doubt that the Administration had decided to relieve McClellan from his position as general in chief at an early opportune moment, and the language of the first paragraph was employed as a palpable excuse. In fact, as early as March 7th, Stanton had telegraphed Halleck: "Please send to me the limits of a military department that would place all the Western operations you deem expedient under your command."

McClellan's first information of the promulgation of this order was derived from the Washington newspapers, and, although he could not but feel the loss of confidence, he received the order with becoming dignity and wrote to the President: "You will find, under present circumstances, I shall work as cheerfully as before, and that no consideration of self will in any manner interfere with the discharge of my public duties." †

The final stage in the evolution of the Peninsular campaign had now been reached by the President's making no objection to it, and giving certain directions regarding its execution. By this act the Administration became jointly responsible with McClellan, if indeed not wholly so, for the adoption of a plan of campaign which had not been recommended by the council of war, unless certain specific provisions could first be complied with. As a consequence an ill-digested plan was undertaken which became a fruitful source of unpleasant recrimination, misunderstanding, and disaster.

To these provisions we must now briefly refer. First, with regard to the neutralization of the Merrimac, it was the opinion of every naval expert consulted that this could not positively be asserted from the re-

* Official War Records, vol. v, p. 54. † Ibid., p. 55.

sults of the first day's fight, although there was a generally hopeful anticipation that in another contest she might be destroyed. But the risks were then too great to proceed upon this hope as upon a certainty. Second, as to the sufficiency of means for the immediate transfer of the great army to the new base, since this was in the hands of Assistant Secretary of War Tucker, and outside of the control of General McClellan, it was particularly the duty of the War Department to give an explicit answer to this proviso. It was, however, well known then that this transfer would require several expeditions before it could be completed, and hence a delay of at least two weeks must ensue from the time of the first embarkation. Third, as the provision with respect to the naval auxiliary force to silence the enemy's batteries at Yorktown was absolutely a question for the Executive alone to decide, it should not have been left undetermined nor indefinite. It is true that McClellan, on March 13th, suggested to Secretary Stanton, "that the Secretary of the Navy be requested to order to Fort Monroe whatever force DuPont can spare, as well as any available force that Goldsborough can send up, as soon as his present operations are completed." To this Secretary Welles replied: "If a movement is to be made upon Norfolk —always a favorite measure of this Department—instant measures will be taken to advise and strengthen Flag-Officer Goldsborough; but unless such be the case, I should be extremely reluctant to take any measure that would even temporarily weaken the efficacy of the blockade, especially at the points under the command of Flag-Officer DuPont. The importance of capturing Norfolk is, I know, deemed almost indispensable by Flag-Officer Goldsborough, who will be happy to co-operate in a movement in that direction, and will, I need not assure you, have the active and earnest efforts of this department to aid him with all the force that can be placed at his disposal." All of which meant that no assistance could be expected from the navy unless Norfolk were the objective. Fourth,

the proviso with regard to the security of Washington could hardly be left to the decision of the commander of the active army alone, and this, therefore, required the consideration of the Administration quite as much as the other three to determine what force might be regarded as sufficient to give an "entire feeling of security."

Had Mr. Stanton, as Secretary of War, or in his capacity as general in chief, to which position he had now practically succeeded, openly stated to General McClellan that the Merrimac is not certainly neutralized; that there is not sufficient water transportation within the control of the Government, nor likely to be, for the immediate transfer of the bulk of the army; that no certain provision can be made, under existing circumstances at Fort Monroe, to detach an auxiliary naval force for the reduction of the Yorktown batteries, and had he then returned the proceedings to the council of war for its further consideration and opinion, it seems certain that the Peninsular plan of campaign would have failed to receive the assent of the council of war. But Stanton's intemperate haste to have the army move somehow and somewhere, as evinced in his first dispatch to McClellan, gave the latter the opportunity to get his army away from the politicians at Washington, which his controlling desire too eagerly embraced at the sacrifice of his usual prudence and cool judgment.

It is very difficult to ascertain satisfactorily what were the determining influences that operated upon General McClellan's mind to lead him to yield the Urbana plan, which he had so ardently advocated in his letter of February 3d, and to adopt the Peninsular plan which, of the three then presented, he recommended only in case of the "worst coming to the worst." The enemy's withdrawal to the Rappahannock line has been suggested as the controlling cause under the supposition that it diminished the advantage that the line of operations from Urbana to Richmond in point of celerity possessed over that from the ene-

my's position at Manassas. But while this might have had a determining influence had Hanover Junction been McClellan's first objective, it could not have affected the choice of Urbana with regard to West Point, the selected objective. In this connection it may be well to quote the testimony of General Sumner before the Committee on the Conduct of the War, which either indicates a remarkable lapse of memory on the part of this gallant old soldier, or that the deliberations of the council of the corps commanders were not as thorough and exhaustive, and therefore impressive, as the importance of the problem demanded. He says: "The first proposition was to go to Annapolis and embark from there, but the President disapproved of that entirely, and that was given up. Then, as I understood it, the decision was that the army should descend the Potomac and land at Urbana on the Rappahannock, only thirty miles from Richmond; not to go down to Fort Monroe at all. I did not dream then that there was any idea of going down to the Peninsula. When the army returned to Fairfax Court House, in March last—my command being still in the advance—another council was convened there, consisting of the four commanders, McDowell, Heintzelman, Keyes, and myself, and the proposition was submitted to us in this form: whether, as the enemy was then rapidly retreating through the country, and the roads were in a very bad condition, it would not be better to turn them by a movement by water, as my understanding was, to descend the Potomac and land at Urbana. With this understanding, that the army was to land at Urbana, I yielded to the proposition; and I will add, that I was never more surprised in my life than when I embarked at Alexandria to learn that the whole army was going down to Fort Monroe. I had not myself dreamed of any such movement, and would not have voted for it." It is also quite remarkable that Keyes was the only one of the four generals composing the council that was originally in favor of the Urbana plan on the 8th

of March, the other three voting for the overland route, and it is reasonable to suppose they voted for the Peninsular plan on the 13th only under the necessity of immediate action and the conviction that it would not be approved unless the qualifying provisions attached to the plan were amply guaranteed.

But these provisions being entirely ignored and others substituted in their place, the modified plan became that of the Administration. It was a foundling for which they had no natural affection, but which from the force of circumstances they were obliged to adopt and nourish. In the meanwhile the water transportation was being collected at Alexandria and the fractions of the army moved to its near vicinity to be ready for embarkation. On the 19th of March McClellan, in obedience to the request of the Secretary, submitted the following outline of the campaign which he proposed to undertake:

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following notes on the proposed operations of the active portion of the Army of the Potomac.

The proposed plan of campaign is to assume Fort Monroe as the first base of operations, taking the line of Yorktown and West Point upon Richmond as the line of operations, Richmond being the objective point. It is assumed that the fall of Richmond involves that of Norfolk and the whole of Virginia; also that we shall fight a decisive battle between West Point and Richmond, to give which battle the rebels will concentrate all their available forces, understanding, as they will, that it involves the fate of their cause. It therefore follows:

1st. That we should collect all our available forces and operate upon adjacent lines, maintaining perfect communication between our columns.

2d. That no time should be lost in reaching the field of battle.

The advantages of the Peninsula between York and James Rivers are too obvious to need explanation. It is also clear that West Point should as soon as possible be reached and used as our main depot, that we may have the shortest line of land transportation for our supplies and the use of the York River.

There are two methods of reaching this point:

1st. By moving directly from Fort Monroe as a base,

and trusting to the roads for our supplies, at the same time landing a strong corps as near Yorktown as possible, in order to turn the rebel lines of defense south of Yorktown; thence to reduce Yorktown and Gloucester by a siege, in all probability involving a delay of weeks, perhaps.

2d. To make a combined naval and land attack upon Yorktown the first object of the campaign. This leads to the most rapid and decisive results. To accomplish this, the navy should at once concentrate upon the York River all their available and most powerful batteries. Its reduction should not in that case require many hours. A strong corps would be pushed up the York, under cover of the navy, directly upon West Point, immediately upon the fall of Yorktown, and we could at once establish our new base of operations at a distance of some twenty-five miles from Richmond, with every facility for developing and bringing into play the whole of our available force on either or both banks of the James.

It is impossible to urge too strongly the absolute necessity of the full co-operation of the navy as a part of this programme. Without it the operations may be prolonged for many weeks, and we may be forced to carry in front several strong positions, which by their aid could be turned without serious loss of either time or men.

It is also of first importance to bear in mind the fact, already alluded to, that the capture of Richmond necessarily involves the prompt fall of Norfolk, while an operation against Norfolk, if successful at the beginning of the campaign, facilitates the reduction of Richmond merely by the demoralization of the rebel troops involved, and that after the fall of Norfolk we should be obliged to undertake the capture of Richmond by the same means which would have accomplished it in the beginning, having meanwhile afforded the rebels ample time to perfect their defensive arrangements; for they would well know, from the moment the Army of the Potomac changed its base to Fort Monroe, that Richmond must be its ultimate object.

It may be summed up in few words, that for prompt success of this campaign it is absolutely necessary that the navy should at once throw its whole available force, its most powerful vessels, against Yorktown. There is the most important point—there the knot to be cut. An immediate decision upon the subject-matter of this communication is highly desirable, and seems called for by the exigencies of the occasion.*

In this letter McClellan clearly outlines two methods to reach West Point, his first objective: one by a

* Official War Records, vol. v, p. 57 *et seq.*

direct movement upon Yorktown without the aid of the navy, but which foreshadows a siege and a delay of several weeks, and the other a flank movement sustained by the co-operation of the navy, which would insure an immediate success. He states that it is essential to have a decision upon this question at the earliest moment, and he subsequently exhibits the urgent necessity of a prompt decision by importuning the War Department for an answer. On the 20th he telegraphs the Secretary: "Have you received my letter in regard to co-operation of the navy? If so, please see the President at once and telegraph the reply. On your reply much depends, for, as you will see from my letter, I have now to choose at once between the two methods of accomplishing our object." McDowell telegraphs from Washington on the same day to McClellan: "Nothing decisive at the President's. The plan seemed to find favor with all who spoke. The only question seemed to be as to the ability of the navy to do their part. I am to go again in the morning when Barnard returns. Whether the navy can, or not, do anything I think it evident they can not before you can ship another division of Heintzelman's to Old Point. I spoke to the President and he thought this would be best, so as not to keep the means of transportation idle. I would therefore send Heintzelman's second division at once or as soon as you can. His first arrived safe and was landing. The Secretary says you should have no difficulty with Wool." Stanton's reply came on the 22d, saying: "We have been waiting for Barnard to conclude arrangements with navy. He was expected yesterday morning."

General Barnard's inquiries at Fort Monroe brought out the following information, which he telegraphed to McClellan on March 20th:

"Goldsborough can not spare from here anything except the following:

"Victoria, two eight-inch guns and one thirty-pound Parrott.

"Anacostia, Freeborn, Island Belle (Potomac fleet).

"Octoroon, not yet arrived; Fox calls her a regular gunboat of four guns.

"Currituck and Daylight, merchant steamers, like the Potomac gunboats, I suppose.

"The Chocorua, not yet arrived, and the Penobscot, here; each, two eleven-inch guns. He says he can't furnish vessels to attack Yorktown simultaneously, but he thinks what you propose is easily done; that the vessels he mentions are fully adequate to cover a landing, and that with a landing and an advance from here Yorktown will fall."

The testimony of Assistant Secretary of the Navy G. V. Fox and of Commodore Goldsborough, before the Committee on the Conduct of the War, completes the evidence with regard to the navy's co-operation. Mr. Fox says: "Then I got a private note from General McClellan, dated Fairfax Court House, March 14th, in which he says: 'From all accounts received I have such a living faith in the gallant little Monitor that I feel that we can trust her; so I have determined on the Fort Monroe movement.'

"That is all the correspondence there was with the Navy Department upon that subject. It shows that this plan of General McClellan was changed between the time I arrived at Old Point Comfort, which was on the morning of the 9th of March, and the time I got back to Washington, which, I think, was on the 12th. It was determined that the army should go by way of Fort Monroe. The Navy Department never was consulted at all, to my knowledge, in regard to anything connected with the matter. No statement was ever made to us why they were going there beyond this. All that we were told about it is what I have read here. Admiral Goldsborough was put in communication with General McClellan and directed to co-operate with him; and all the force we had available was placed at the disposal of the admiral. I have no knowledge that anything that General McClellan

wanted in the way of attack or defense was ever neglected by our people. No complaint was ever made to the Navy Department. There was never any plan devised by the War Department that I know of that required the navy to operate. The Secretary simply ordered the ships there to do what they could as the exigencies arose. In the private letter from which I have read General McClellan speaks of operations against Yorktown and Gloucester. But I do not think any of the army officers expected those places to be attacked by ships. Yorktown is sixty or seventy feet above the water; the vessels could not reach the batteries on the crest of the hill, and therefore they would be exposed to destruction without being able to return the fire. Admiral Goldsborough was in constant communication with General McClellan, and they were very well disposed toward each other to the last moment so far as I ever knew.

"*Question.*—It has been said that one reason for the failure of the Peninsular campaign was the detention of the army before the lines of Yorktown a whole month in consequence of the navy not being able to co-operate and secure to us the free navigation of the York and James Rivers. Will you state what you know in relation to that matter?

"*Answer.*—So far as I know all the vessels that General McClellan required in his operations against Yorktown were placed at his disposal by Admiral Goldsborough. I am not aware that he ever required that we should attack Yorktown, or that it was ever expected that we should do so. All the avenues of supply to the army there were free and open as far as the army had possession. General McClellan expected the navy to neutralize the Merrimac, and I promised that it should be done, and that she should never pass Hampton Roads."

Commodore Goldsborough's testimony was to the same effect, and we are forced to conclude that no definite co-operation of the navy was distinctly promised by the Secretary of the Navy, or any other official

who was in a position to carry out the requisite provisions for such a co-operation as McClellan had in view. Under these circumstances he could well point to the distinct and explicit language of his letter of March 19th, where he was obliged by the necessity of the case to adopt the first method of advance and be subjected to a delay of weeks in the siege of Yorktown. But it must also be said that all along he hoped for a more favorable outcome of his movements in the advance of his army owing to a misconception of the topographical features of the Peninsula, especially with regard to the character and location of the Warwick River, to which we shall refer hereafter.

CHAPTER IX.

MANASSAS EVACUATED.—DEFENSE OF WASHINGTON.

To revert now to the position of the Confederate forces in Virginia which had so long held the Army of the Potomac confined to the defensive lines surrounding Washington. This Confederate Army of the Potomac, which, according to the statement of General Johnston, its commander, never exceeded fifty thousand effectives, was stretched in observation from Aquia Creek along the Potomac batteries and at the principal fords of the Occoquan and Bull Run, in close touch with the outposts of the Union army as far as Leesburg, while its main body and reserves were in a strong defensive position at Centreville and Manassas. Colonel Stuart, the renowned and accomplished cavalry commander, kept General Johnston well informed of the growing strength of the Union army, so that the latter was well aware from this and other reliable sources that he would not long be able to maintain his position whenever McClellan should begin to advance against him. Called to a conference with the Confederate President, Mr. Davis, at Richmond, about the 20th of February, the depressing condition of the Confederate military status was considered, and it was then determined to make immediate preparations to withdraw the army from its dangerous advanced position to the safer defensive position behind the Rappahannock River as soon as the condition of the roads would permit. The successes of the Union forces in February at Forts Henry and Donelson, resulting in the occupation of Nashville,

were indeed so depressing to the Confederate cause in the early part of 1862 that even a partial success on the part of the Union forces in Virgina would probably have been fatal to their hope of success. "Recent events," said Mr. Davis to General Johnston, "have cast on our arms and our hopes the gloomiest shadows, and at such a time we must show redoubled energy and resolution." Under these circumstances and considering the enormous preponderance of strength in McClellan's favor, it was Johnston's purpose to effect his withdrawal at the very earliest moment that the condition of the roads and weather would permit, consistent with saving his guns and accumulated supplies. He had reported his army as crippled and its efficiency and discipline greatly impaired owing to the lack of a sufficiency of general officers, and that the great accumulation of subsistence stores at Manassas and at the meat-curing establishment at Thoroughfare Gap would prove a serious impediment to his prompt withdrawal, and he feared that much of these supplies would have to be sacrificed owing to the limited means of transportation at his disposal. The activity displayed by the Union troops under Hooker on the eastern shore, when preparations were being made to attack the Potomac batteries, of which Johnston was informed by his spies, convinced him that McClellan was preparing for an early movement. He was also greatly concerned by the Harper's Ferry movement on the 27th of February threatening his extended left flank and was preparing to withdraw about the last of February without risking further delay. It thus appears that had the Potomac canal boats been a few inches narrower McClellan's Harper's Ferry expedition might have precipitated the retirement of the Confederate army under adverse circumstances to them and justified McClellan's anticipations of a glorious success.

The Confederates began retiring from their positions on the Potomac early on the morning of the 8th

of March, but the troops in the vicinity of Manassas did not leave their camps till the following evening. It was conducted with secrecy and celerity, considering the limited transportation and badness of the roads, and but little property other than the heavy guns in the Potomac batteries and the subsistence surplus before mentioned was abandoned or destroyed. It must be confessed that this movement on the part of the Confederates was a complete surprise to McClellan, and in his ignorance of its immediate probability is found another marked evidence of the utter inefficiency of his service of information. On his arrival at General Porter's headquarters, McClellan issued orders for a general movement of the Army of the Potomac toward Centreville and Manassas, to take place on the morning of the 10th of March. This was not with any intention of inaugurating the overland campaign, but, as he states, "to give the troops an opportunity to gain some experience on the march and in bivouac preparatory to the campaign, and to get rid of the superfluous baggage and other impedimenta, which accumulates so easily around an army encamped for a long time in one locality." After a brief one day's march toward Centreville the main body of the army was moved back on the 11th of March to the vicinity of Alexandria to prepare for embarkation to the Peninsula, and a brigade of cavalry, under General Stoneman's command, was sent forward in reconnoissance of the enemy's line of retreat on the morning of the 14th, and which ended at Cedar Run. McClellan believed that the withdrawal of the Confederates was due to a knowledge of his intended movement, which they had in some way acquired, and he ever maintained that it justified his prediction of their action should his Urbana campaign be adopted. It is certainly now well established that McClellan was in error in assuming that his plan of campaign was known to General Johnston. Indeed, the latter was for several days in complete ignorance as to the line of advance that McClellan intended to follow, and, in order to provide for every contingency, he first estab-

lished himself on the Rappahannock, placing General Holmes with the brigades of Whiting, Wigfall, and Hampton on the right in the vicinity of Fredericksburg; the two divisions of Ewell and Early at the center on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad; and the divisions of Smith and Longstreet on the left at Culpeper Court House. In justification of this disposition, he says: "We had to regard four routes to Richmond as practicable for the Federal army: That chosen in the previous July; another east of the Potomac to the mouth of the Potomac Creek and thence to Fredericksburg; the third and fourth by water, the one to the Lower Rappahannock, the other to Fort Monroe; and from these points respectively by direct roads. As the Confederate troops in Virginia were disposed, it seemed to me that invasion by the second route would be the most difficult to meet; for as the march in Maryland would be covered by the Potomac, the Federal general might hope to conceal it from us until the passage of the river was begun and so place himself at least two days' march nearer to Richmond than the Army of Northern Virginia on Bull Run. I did not doubt, therefore, that this route would be taken by General McClellan. The opinion was first suggested by the location of a division of the United States Army on it opposite Dumfries."

To carry out the provisions for the permanent retention of Manassas Junction and the security of Washington, General McClellan issued the necessary instructions, March 16th, to Generals Banks and Wadsworth. Banks commanding the Fifth Corps, then consisting of Williams's and Shields's divisions, was directed to intrench his command strongly in the vicinity of Manassas, and to open the line of the Manassas Gap Railroad as far as Strasburg in the Shenandoah Valley, and when this was accomplished to intrench at least a brigade near the crossing of the Shenandoah; to build blockhouses at all the railroad bridges, and to occupy, with strong grand guards, Warrenton, Warrenton Junction, and, if possible, the theater as far

to the front as the Rappahannock, the general object being to cover the line of the Potomac and Washington securely. He enjoined Wadsworth, who had been designated by the President as the military Governor of the District of Columbia, to maintain the forts and their armaments in the best possible condition, and to make such a disposition of the troops under his command as to insure a thorough protection of his front and flanks, relying upon efficient patrols to scour the country in advance for information as to the movements of the enemy. In formulating these instructions McClellan had no other idea than that the enemy would certainly withdraw the bulk of his forces to meet him on the Peninsula, and thus leave only insignificant raiding parties in the vicinity of Washington. With this in mind he conceived that he had fulfilled all the requirements of leaving Washington entirely secure. But he had not reckoned upon the audacity of Stonewall Jackson in command of the Confederate forces in the Valley. The withdrawal of the Confederates to the Rappahannock on the 9th of March necessarily compelled Jackson to retire from Winchester, which he did rather reluctantly on the evening of the 11th of March, and was followed up the Valley by Shields's division of Banks's corps as far as Mount Jackson, about twenty miles south of Strasburg. On the 20th of March Williams's division, in obedience to McClellan's instructions of March 16th, began its march from Winchester to Manassas *via* Berryville and Snicker's Gap, and Shields withdrew from his advanced position at Strasburg to Kernstown, near Winchester.

Jackson was informed of this retrograde movement on the 21st by Colonel Ashby, his cavalry commander, who kept a close touch with the rear guard of Shields's division, and as he had also heard through his spies in Winchester of the movement of Williams's division, he determined to hasten forward all his available strength for an immediate attack. He hoped for success, for his information led him to believe that the strength of the Union forces remain-

ing at Winchester was less than was actually the case, but at any rate he was apprehensive lest they should leave the Valley, and it was important to detain them there. Accordingly he hastened the march of his three brigades and formed his line of battle about two o'clock in the afternoon of the 23d of March in front of the position assumed by Shields's division at Kernstown. Colonel Kimball, Fourteenth Indiana Volunteers, who commanded the Union troops on the day of the battle, Shields having been wounded the afternoon before in Ashby's preliminary attack, promptly penetrated Jackson's plan of turning the Union right. The Confederates were defeated with a loss in killed, wounded, and missing of seven hundred and eighteen, while that of the Union troops amounted to five hundred and ninety. But the advantages that accrued to the Confederate cause more than balanced the loss of victory. By this bold stroke Jackson seriously interfered with the contemplated disposition of the Union forces in the establishment of the Manassas Gap line. General Banks, who, after consulting with Shields on the morning of the 23d, had concluded that Jackson would not hazard an attack so far from any support, had taken his departure for Washington after seeing that Williams's division was well on its way to Manassas. He had not proceeded far before he was overtaken by the news of the battle, and he hastily returned, turning back meanwhile the two brigades of Williams's division that were within reach. The second brigade (Abercrombie's) had reached Aldie on the day of the battle, and this alone of Williams's division proceeded to Manassas in accordance with the original plan.

The result of all this was that Banks followed Jackson with five brigades up the Valley, and the arrangements that had been devised by McClellan for the protection of Washington had to be abandoned at a time when it was most inopportune for him. For at this time the divisions of his army were being embarked from Alexandria as rapidly as water transportation

could be furnished, and he was calculating upon taking the entire strength of four corps for service in the Peninsula. But now came into operation the effects of that centralization of military authority, which the President's War Order No. 2 had fixed in the War Department, by virtually constituting the Secretary the general in chief. Following this assignment, four military departments were constituted in the eastern theater of war, whose commanders were independent of each other, their common military superior being the Secretary of War. These were: The Middle, under the command of Major-General Dix, March 22d; the Mountain, under Major-General Frémont, March 29th; the Rappahannock, under Major-General McDowell; and the Shenandoah, under Major-General Banks, April 4th; these, with Wool in command at Fort Monroe and McClellan in command of the Army of the Potomac, gave six separate commanders independent of each other. Thus was McClellan, at a time of essential importance to him, shorn of all power to secure joint co-operation of these portions of the Army of the Potomac in the same theater of war. Granting all that the most enthusiastic admirers of Mr. Stanton claim for him as a war minister, it can scarcely be conceded that he was equal to the task of directing armies or planning campaigns. And while it is true that Mr. Lincoln was himself a close student of the military situation, and was endowed with the rarest sagacity and discernment, yet he was enormously hampered by the flood of suggestion that poured in upon him from the active-minded and aggressive members of the Committee on the Conduct of the War, from members of the Cabinet and of Congress, as well as by the exigencies of the changing political situation. Such a condition of affairs is always to be expected in a Government like ours, and the exception to the rule occurs only when an educated soldier like Grant achieves such marked success as to be authorized by the President, as commander in chief, to employ the armed forces of the nation,

entirely unhampered by the military judgments of a civilian Secretary of War.

The first serious disappointment that McClellan experienced was the order detaching Blenker's division from the Army of the Potomac and assigning it to Frémont. How this came about is explained in the President's own words, in his letter to General Frémont, June 16, 1862: "Your dispatch of yesterday, reminding me of a supposed understanding that I would furnish you a corps of thirty-five thousand men, and asking of me the 'fulfillment of this understanding,' is received. I am ready to come to a fair settlement of accounts with you on the fulfillment of understandings.

"Early in March last, when I assigned you to the command of the Mountain Department, I did tell you I would give you all the force I could, and that I hoped to make it reach thirty-five thousand. You at the same time told me that within a reasonable time you would seize the railroad at or east of Knoxville, Tenn., if you could. There was then in the department a force supposed to be twenty-five thousand, the exact number as well known to you as to me. After looking about two or three days, you called and distinctly told me that if I would add the Blenker division to the force already in the department you would undertake the job. The Blenker division contained ten thousand, and at the expense of great dissatisfaction to General McClellan, I took it from his army and gave it to you. My promise was literally fulfilled. I have given you all I could, and I have given you very nearly, if not quite, thirty-five thousand."

This loss of one division of the Second Corps, and the changed conditions of the intended covering force in front of Washington at the very moment that McClellan was about to proceed to Fort Monroe, gave him much anxiety in arranging for a suitable force that would leave Washington "entirely secure." Keeping in view the integrity of the strength that he conceived to be necessary for the work he had to per-

form on the Peninsula under the fixed idea that he would there fight the whole strength of the Confederacy, and that nothing of theirs would be left behind, he sent the following letter to the adjutant general:

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,
STEAMER COMMODORE, *April* 1, 1862.

GENERAL: I have to request that you will lay the following communication before the honorable Secretary of War:

The approximate numbers and positions of the troops left near and in rear of the Potomac are as follows:

General Dix has, after guarding the railroads under his charge, sufficient to give him five thousand for the defense of Baltimore and one thousand nine hundred and eighty-eight available for the Eastern Shore, Annapolis, etc. Fort Delaware is very well garrisoned by about four hundred men.

The garrisons of the forts around Washington amount to ten thousand six hundred men ; other disposable troops now with General Wadsworth, about eleven thousand four hundred men.

The troops employed in guarding the various railways in Maryland amount to some three thousand three hundred and fifty-nine men. These it is designed to relieve, being old regiments, by dismounted cavalry, and to send forward to Manassas.

General Abercrombie occupies Warrenton with a force which, including Colonel Geary at White Plains and the cavalry to be at his disposal, will amount to some seven thousand seven hundred and eighty men, with twelve pieces of artillery.

I have the honor to request that all the troops organized for service in Pennsylvania and New York, and in any of the Eastern States, may be ordered to Washington. I learn from Governor Curtin that there are some three thousand five hundred men now ready in Pennsylvania. This force I should be glad to have sent to Manassas. Four thousand men from General Wadsworth I desire to be ordered to Manassas. These troops, with the railroad guards above alluded to, will make up a force under the command of General Abercrombie of something like eighteen thousand six hundred and thirty-nine men.

It is my design to push General Blenker's division from Warrenton upon Strasburg. He should remain at Strasburg long enough to allow matters to assume a definite form in that region before proceeding to his ultimate destination.

The troops in the Valley of the Shenandoah will thus, including Blenker's division, ten thousand and twenty-eight strong, with twenty-four pieces of artillery; Banks's Fifth Corps, which embraces the command of General Shields,

nineteen thousand six hundred and eighty-seven strong, with forty-one guns; some three thousand six hundred and fifty-two disposable cavalry and the railroad guards, about two thousand one hundred men, amount to about thirty-five thousand four hundred and sixty-seven men.

It is designed to relieve General Hooker by one regiment, say eight hundred and fifty men, being, with some five hundred cavalry, one thousand three hundred and fifty men on the Lower Potomac.

To recapitulate:

At Warrenton there is to be	7,780
At Manassas, say	10,859
In the Valley of the Shenandoah	35,467
On the Lower Potomac	1,350
In all	55,456

There would thus be left for the garrisons and the front of Washington, under General Wadsworth, some eighteen thousand, inclusive of the batteries under instruction. The troops organizing or ready for service in New York, I learn, will probably number more than four thousand. These should be assembled at Washington, subject to disposition where their services may be most required.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEO. B. McCLELLAN, *Major General Commanding.*

Brigadier-General L. THOMAS, *Adjutant General, U. S. Army.**

But the very next day, April 2d, General Wadsworth reported to the Secretary of War that in his judgment the numerical strength and character of the force left under his command was entirely inadequate to and unfit for the important duty to which it was assigned. He reported that he had but fifteen thousand three hundred and thirty-five infantry, forty-two hundred and ninety-four artillery, and eight hundred and forty-eight cavalry, a total of twenty thousand four hundred and seventy-seven, leaving, after deducting those sick, in arrest, and confinement, but nineteen thousand and twenty-two present for duty.

* Official War Records, vol. v, p. 60 *et seq.*

CHAPTER X.

EMBARKATION FOR FORT MONROE. — OPENING OF PENINSULAR CAMPAIGN.—SIEGE OF YORKTOWN.—BATTLE OF WILLIAMSBURG.—ADOPTION OF WHITE HOUSE AS BASE.

Upon this the Secretary of War referred the matter to Adjutant-General Lorenzo Thomas and Major-General E. A. Hitchcock with instructions to examine all the circumstances bearing on the case, and to report to him whether the President's order and instructions had been complied with in respect to the forces to be left for the defense of Washington and its security, and at Manassas, and, if not, wherein those instructions had been departed from. These officers at once substantially reported that the President's order required that the city of Washington should be left entirely secure before any new base of operations should be taken up; that in their opinion it was the judgment of the general officers forming the council of war of March 13th that it would require a force of thirty thousand men to man the forts properly, which, with the covering force of twenty-five thousand, would make a total force of fifty-five thousand; that if there was need of a military force for the safety of the city of Washington within its own limits, that referred to in the report of General Wadsworth would seem to be entirely inadequate. In conclusion they say: "In view of the opinion expressed by the council of the commanders of army corps of the force necessary for the defense of the capital, though not numerically stated, and of the force represented by General McClellan as left for that purpose, we are of the opinion that the

requirement of the President that this city shall be left entirely secure, not only in the opinion of the general in chief, but that of the commanders of all the army corps also, has not been fully complied with."

As a result of this report and its full approval by the War Department and the President, the latter directed that either Sumner's or McDowell's corps be detached from McClellan's command and be retained in front of Washington, and on April 4th the order detaching McDowell's corps was issued. Thus instead of carrying with him to the Peninsula, as he had expected, four full corps, McClellan was at the last moment deprived of a corps and a division, amounting in all to about fifty thousand men.

Before this action of the Administration was taken McClellan had embarked on the steamer Commodore, and was on his way to Fort Monroe, having in mind no apprehension that his strength was to be further reduced after Blenker had been taken from him, and though he feared he could not rely upon any efficient co-operation of the navy, he allowed his imagination to indulge in the hope that some sort of assistance might be arranged by him in consultation with Commodore Goldsborough. He also believed that he would be able to control the movements and disposition of all the forces operating in the Valley and those in the vicinity of Washington and at Manassas. With these anticipations in mind he reached Fort Monroe on the afternoon of the 2d of April, and as early as possible sought an interview with Commodore Goldsborough, from whom he learned that the assistance he expected from the navy could not be furnished; that the James River, as a line of supply or for flanking operations, must needs be eliminated from his plans so long as the Merrimac threatened aggressive action; and that but a limited assistance of the navy could be furnished as a protection to his right flank below the mouth of the York River. General McClellan was forced to concede the justness of Commodore Goldsborough's decision in this matter, as the latter

YORKTOWN
TO
WILLIAMSBURG
Scale
0 1 2 3 Miles
WILLIAMSBURG
JAMESTOWN ISLAND
College Creek
S Kings Mill Wharf
Queen's Creek
Whitaker
Church
Grove's Wharf
HALTWAY HOUSE
Skiff Creek
Gloucester Point
YORKTOWN
Confederate Defence
MULBERRY ISLAND
Wormley's Creek
WARWICK RIVER
WARWICK CH
YORK RIVER

was especially charged with the destruction of the Merrimac should this vessel again seek a conflict with the United States fleet in Hampton Roads, and he was precluded from diminishing his naval strength so long as this formidable armor-clad was afloat.

Under these circumstances McClellan was forced to plan his campaign up the Peninsula, with the James River on his left flank controlled by the Confederate navy. The strip of country called the Peninsula lies between the James and York Rivers and the Chesapeake Bay south of the mouth of the York. These rivers form tidal estuaries of the Chesapeake, and from them and the bay itself many smaller estuaries, also affected by the tides, make well up into the Peninsula, thus affording many excellent positions of defense where a small force may hold a much greater one in temporary check. But these could readily be turned should the flank approaches by water be in the possession of the aggressor. The ground is generally low-lying and covered with dense wood, except where clearings have been made for cultivation; the soil is a sandy loam which readily becomes miry and boggy after light rains. Many marshes occur in the neighborhood of the numerous creeks, which in rainy weather are impassable except upon corduroy roads. The Peninsula is traversed by but two main roads from the vicinity of Fort Monroe to Williamsburg, near where they unite to separate again in their progress northward; the westerly, or Warwick road, starting from Newport News skirts the James River and passes through Warwick Court House and crosses the Warwick River at Lee's Mill; the easterly, or Yorktown road, starts from Hampton, running generally parallel to the Warwick road, crossing the head waters of the Back and Poquosin Rivers, and passes through Big Bethel and Cockletown until it reaches Yorktown; thence it approaches the Warwick road to within a mile at the Halfway House and joins it at Williamsburg. Several connecting roads unite these main roads, but they are all ordinary country roads generally found in

a sparsely settled territory of an agricultural people. Beyond Williamsburg the Peninsula is divided by the Chickahominy into two portions; that on the east lying between the Pamunkey and the Chickahominy, and the western portion between the Chickahominy and the James. Here the land is somewhat higher and drier, but it is also much better adapted to a defensive than to an offensive campaign, owing to its indifferent roads, marshy streams, and dense woods.

The importance of the Peninsula as affording a possible line of operations to the Union forces toward Richmond as an objective had not been ignored. As early as May 21, 1861, General J. B. Magruder, having been assigned to the command of the Confederate forces on the Peninsula, was directed to take immediate measures to strengthen the defenses at Yorktown and to hasten the construction of a line of defense at Williamsburg by joining the heads of College and Queen's Creeks by an intrenched line. Recognizing the extreme importance of his problem, Magruder did not hesitate to employ every means within his power to accomplish it at the very earliest opportunity. Not only did he utilize every soldier of his command for the necessary labor, but also made requisitions upon the slave owners to the extent of half of their slaves, and impressed all the free negroes for compulsory labor to construct the lines of works deemed necessary for his purpose. By the latter part of July, 1861, he had practically completed three strong defensive lines across the Peninsula. The first or more advanced of these extended from Harrod's Mill on the Poquosin to Young's Mill on Deep Creek, having supporting batteries covering its flanks; the second, or what afterward became the main line, had its left flank at Gloucester and Yorktown, whose works closed the mouth of the York River; then followed the right bank of the Warwick to the vicinity of Lee's Mill, where it turned to cross Mulberry Island, and rested its right upon Skiff Creek; the third, consisting of a series of detached redoubts, was placed in front of Williamsburg

effectively to command all the roads approaching the village from the direction of Fort Monroe. With a living faith in the supreme importance of his trust, he labored with indefatigable industry to strengthen his lines with all possible accessory means of defense, and at the same time never ceased to importune the Confederate War Department for additions to his forces and to his armament during this period of preparation.

In the meantime the Assistant Secretary of War, Mr. John Tucker, assisted by Colonel Ingalls and Captain Hodges, of the Quartermaster's Department of the regular army, was fully occupied in effecting the transfer of the Army of the Potomac to its new base at Fort Monroe. "In thirty-seven days," says he, "from the time I received the order in Washington, the vessels chartered (one hundred and thirteen steamers, one hundred and eighty-eight schooners, and eighty-eight barges) had transported from Perryville, Alexandria, and Washington, one hundred and twenty-one thousand five hundred men, fourteen thousand five hundred and ninety-two animals, eleven hundred and fifty wagons, forty-four batteries, seventy-four ambulances, besides pontoon bridges, telegraph materials and the enormous quantity of equipage, etc., required for an army of such magnitude." While this problem of logistics was in process of execution it was a matter of the gravest apprehension lest the Merrimac should steal from her anchorage and inflict a deadly blow upon the transports while unloading their precious freight at the wharves of Fort Monroe.

Notwithstanding the great success that attended the transshipment of so vast an army, unexpected delays and difficulties had occurred, especially with regard to the wagons and animals belonging to the land transportation of some of the troops. At the time of McClellan's arrival at Fort Monroe, in the afternoon of April 2d, the disembarkation of the cavalry and artillery reserve was still in progress. Deciding upon an immediate advance he hastened the unloading of the transports then in the harbor, and proceeded to

organize the available troops for this purpose. These were Sedgwick's division of the Second Corps, Hamilton's and Porter's of the Third, and Couch's and Smith's of the Fourth; Sykes's brigade of regular infantry, Hunt's reserve artillery, and the Fifth United States and the Third Pennsylvania Regiments of cavalry—in all about fifty-eight thousand men and one hundred guns, besides the artillery batteries attached to the several divisions. Casey's division of the Fourth Corps had also been disembarked at this time, but as it was not then supplied with wagon transportation it could not participate in the forward movement.

With the exception of the more prominent features of the Peninsula, such as were delineated upon the Coast Survey charts, much of the important topography of his new theater of operations was practically unknown to General McClellan. In planning his campaign he relied mainly upon the topographical details as laid down upon what was known as the "Cram" map, compiled by Colonel T. J. Cram, of the Topographical Engineers, serving at Fort Monroe as staff officer of General Wool. In his report McClellan says: "As to the force and position of the enemy, the information then in our possession was vague and untrustworthy. Much of it was obtained from the staff officers of General Wool, and was simply to the effect that Yorktown was surrounded by a continuous line of earthworks, with strong water batteries on the York River, and garrisoned by not less than fifteen thousand troops, under the command of General J. B. Magruder. Maps which had been prepared by the Topographical Engineers under General Wool's command were furnished me, in which the Warwick River was represented as flowing parallel to, but not crossing the road from Newport News to Williamsburg, making the so-called Mulberry Island a real island; and we had no information as to the true course of the Warwick *across* the Peninsula, nor of the formidable line of works which it covered." This is in strong contrast to the language he used in describing the

character of the theater of operations he desired to assume in his letter of February 3d to the President.

The condition of things at this time, as they must have presented themselves to his mind, may be described as follows: The greater bulk of his army had reached its new base, and the remainder, either *en route* or about to embark, would give him four full army corps with which to carry on his campaign; with sufficient wagons to move the greater part of the force already landed, he deemed it more prudent to advance upon Yorktown at once without waiting to collect the transports necessary to land a force on the Gloucester side of the York River, and, expecting to invest Yorktown on the second day of his movement, he confidently hoped to be then in a better position to determine his future plans. Ignorant of the obstacle presented by the strong defenses of the Warwick, which were not delineated on the Cram map, his plan appeared to be entirely feasible. Accordingly, on April 3d he issued orders for the movement to begin early the next morning. His command was organized into two columns, each to follow separate roads; the left column, under the command of General Keyes, was directed to follow the James River or Warwick road to the vicinity of Young's Mill, while the right column was to move upon the Yorktown road by way of Big Bethel and Howard's Bridge. The former was composed of Smith's and Couch's divisions with the Fifth United States Cavalry attached, and the latter, commanded by General Heintzelman, comprised Porter's, Hamilton's, and Sedgwick's divisions, to which Averill's Third Pennsylvania Cavalry was assigned. Following the right column came the reserve infantry, cavalry, and artillery of the army. The object of the first day's march was to force the enemy to abandon the works at Big Bethel, Howard's Bridge, and Ship Point on the right, and those of Young's Mill on the left, all of which was successfully accomplished. Orders for the next day directed Keyes to move upon Lee's Mill, brush aside any of the enemy's force found

in his path, and to proceed to the vicinity of the Halfway House in rear of Yorktown, where he was to establish his command so as to prevent the escape of the garrison at Yorktown and re-enforcements from being thrown in. Meanwhile the right column was expected to establish itself in front of Yorktown, and the combined operations of the two would isolate the garrison and effect its speedy capture.

The satisfactory progress of the first day's march was not to be repeated on the second day. Keyes's column came in sight of the enemy's works at Lee's Mill at eleven o'clock, and he was forced to deploy his leading division (Smith's) to develop the enemy's strength and position. It was not until late in the afternoon that Keyes ascertained that the enemy occupied "a strongly fortified position behind Warwick River, the fords in which have been destroyed by dams, and the approaches to which are through dense forests, swamps, and marshes. No part of his line as far as discovered can be taken by assault without an enormous waste of life." The rain had been falling in torrents since early morning, causing the roads to become exceedingly difficult for troops and almost impassable for wheeled vehicles. Hence but few pieces of artillery could be brought to the front to reply to those of the enemy in position, and later, when the troops bivouacked for the night, none of their ammunition, forage, and provision trains had arrived.

The right column, Porter's division leading, was united at Cockletown on the morning of the 5th, and moved toward Yorktown over a marshy and narrow road which the heavy rain rendered almost impassable. The rear divisions were compelled to halt for some hours to have a clear road, while Porter deployed his division in front of the Yorktown defenses in the face of skirmish and artillery fire. In the mists and rain the defenses of the enemy loomed up with magnified impressiveness, the ground in front appeared to be impracticable for the deployment of the light batteries of the Union forces, and, until this was cleared of the

enemy by skirmishers, no advance in force seemed practicable. The leading division therefore bivouacked on the ground which the orders of the previous day directed it to occupy, while the remainder of the right column was practically anchored in the mire some distance to the rear.

McClellan, having found himself thus unexpectedly held in check on his left and his plan of isolating the garrison of Yorktown unexecuted, was, under the necessity of immediate action, forced to decide upon a new plan. To add to his discouragements, he just then received notification from the War Department that McDowell's corps had been detached from the force under his immediate command and ordered to report to the Secretary of War. "To me," says McClellan, "the blow was most discouraging. It frustrated all my plans for impending operations. It fell when I was too deeply committed to withdraw. It left me incapable of continuing operations which had been begun. It compelled the adoption of another, a different, and a less effective plan of campaign. It made rapid and brilliant operations impossible. It was a fatal error." This extract from McClellan's report, written, it must be remembered, some time after the campaign had terminated, seems to imply that the retention of McDowell's corps at Washington had an immediate and controlling influence upon the plan of operations that needs must be determined upon in the predicament in which the Army of the Potomac found itself on the afternoon of the 5th of April. A better insight of the workings of McClellan's mind is, however, presented in the letters he wrote about this time to Commodore Goldsborough in making a request for naval assistance in his operations against Yorktown. In that of April 5th, 10.30 P. M., he says: "The rebels are close in my front, and we have had sharp cannonading most of the afternoon, with but little loss on our side—some eight or ten killed. Our neighbors are in a very strong position, their left at Yorktown (strongly intrenched with numerous guns), thence extending

along the line of the Warwick River to its mouth. This river is some seven feet deep to a point near Lee's Mill, banks marshy and almost impassable; from point to point they have batteries. The roads are inferior and I have had great difficulty in moving. To-morrow I shall spend in making reconnoissances, in repairing the roads, getting up supplies, and establishing my depot at Ship Point. I can not turn Yorktown without a battle, in which I must use heavy artillery and go through the preliminary operations of a siege. The reconnoissances of to-morrow will enable me to form a pretty correct judgment of what I have to meet and the best way of overcoming the difficulties before me. Naval co-operation seems to me more essential than ever. I can give you my best ideas to-morrow night. I learn that the Mystic has reached you. Will you be able to put her at the Yorktown batteries if I find it necessary?

"If I find the position as strong as I now anticipate, I will probably propose to you that I shall get my siege guns and mortars in battery to open simultaneously with the action of such naval vessels as you can spare. Re-enforcements are said to be arriving from Richmond and Norfolk. I fear our Severn expedition may be impracticable. I received this morning a dispatch from the adjutant general informing me that McDowell's corps (some thirty-five thousand men) had been withdrawn from my command. I need not tell you that nothing could have astonished me more. I received the dispatch while listening to the rebel guns, and was well assured that I required all the force I had counted on."

In response to a request for naval assistance on April 3d, Commodore Goldsborough had sent three small screw steamers—the Wachusett, Penobscot, and Currituck—to York River, under the command of Commander Missroom, with directions to co-operate with the army. These were wooden vessels of sufficient armament to protect the transports against any of the enemy's vessels on the York River, and to cover

any landing the troops might be required to make outside the range of the great guns of the enemy, but not at all designed to attack the heavily armed earthen forts at Yorktown and Gloucester. McClellan perfectly understood their limitations, and could have had no expectation that they were to be otherwise employed. Commodore Goldsborough, in his reply to the letter above quoted, was explicit on the point as to what he might rely on so far as the assistance of the navy was concerned at Yorktown. He says: "Mystic not here, and not expected for some time. Until the guns at Gloucester Point be turned by the movement up the Severn it will be wholly impracticable, in my judgment, for the small naval force I can now detail to assist you to attack the forts at Yorktown and Gloucester with any prospect of success, unless, forsooth, it be practicable to run past these forts at night and so get on the inside of them and assail them in flank. Of this Missroom may judge. Tell him what I say. You know my position here. I dare not leave the Merrimac and consorts unguarded. Were she out of the way, everything I have here should be at work in your behalf; but as things stand, you must not count on my sending any more vessels to aid your operations than those I mentioned to you. Some of these are now at and about York River, under Missroom, and the other three I hold here to move with your division up the Severn, if you still intend to send over there; and if you do not, I shall send them off to Missroom on being informed of the fact by you."

McClellan had now arrived at the most critical point of his career as a commander of an army in the presence of an enemy. At the end of the second day's march he found himself unexpectedly blocked in front of an unsuspected obstacle, behind which the enemy was prepared to offer the utmost resistance. He assumed that Magruder had then a strength of from fifteen thousand to twenty thousand men, and that he was also receiving re-enforcements from Richmond and Norfolk. He had just learned that McDowell's corps

was taken from him, and that the navy could give him no assistance in the reduction of the Yorktown defenses. Added to these main sources of discouragement there were many vexatious incidents that occurred at this most inopportune time to contribute their deterring effect so far as aggressive action was concerned. The slow progress over roads rendered almost impassable by heavy rains, the difficulty of getting up supplies, the congestion of the roads by reason of the excessive impedimenta, and the unfavorable nature of the topography for the deployment of troops, were distressing sources of vexation and discouragement. In addition to these untoward circumstances of his immediate surroundings he could not but believe that the Administration was unfriendly and ungenerous. For he had received the order depriving him of all control over General Wool and the troops under his command, and forbidding him to detach any of them without the latter's sanction; he had been notified that the Secretary had directed the discontinuance of recruiting of volunteers and broken up the recruiting depots, and had organized the troops in the eastern theater of war into six separate departments, each independent of the others, and all reporting directly to the Secretary of War.

What effect any or all of these conditions had in causing him to adopt the waiting policy of a siege rather than the bold action of an immediate assault it would be difficult to determine. Practically, the former course was decided upon in his own mind at the end of the second day's movement. Its development can be traced back to the influence which his observations and study of the siege of Sevastopol left upon his mind; he refers to it as a possibility in his letter of March 19th to the Secretary of War; also in his confidential memorandum of March 22d, specifying the character and amount of siege artillery he desired to have at his disposition at Fort Monroe; and, finally, from the fact that he brought with him a siege train for just such an eventuality.

Again we have to consider the marked contrast

that existed between his characteristics as a subaltern and as a commander. In the Mexican War, as a junior officer, he was brave, courageous, intrepid, and sometimes rashly venturesome; later in life, as a commander, he was timid, irresolute, halting, and extremely cautious. Had the qualities of the commander been exchanged for those of the subaltern, the result of the magnificent discipline and glowing patriotism of the noble army that he had organized and commanded would have been different from that which history has recorded.

Considering the disparity of strength in McClellan's favor and the incomplete condition of the defenses between Yorktown and the head of the Warwick, it was incumbent upon him to have made a determined effort by assault before deciding upon a siege. The latter was a last resort and always possible. Of this portion of the line General Barnard, chief engineer of the army, says: "The connection between Fort Magruder (the 'white redoubt') and the 'red redoubt' was a mere rifle pit, and from the red redoubt to the swamp *there was nothing whatever*. The ground between and behind these two works was seen and could be swept by our artillery fire. Our assaulting columns would have been from two thirds of a mile to one mile removed from the artillery of Yorktown, from the fire of which undulations of the ground afforded much cover, even supposing that the fire of that place could not have been subdued by our own batteries. The red redoubt, toward which the assault would have been directed, was a very insignificant work." Of this opinion, which was published in 1864, General McClellan says: "Barnard never expressed to him any opinion that an assault was practicable upon any part of the enemy's line, but was decidedly of the opinion that heavy guns were necessary. That he never, at any time, heard a contrary opinion from any one. That there was entire unanimity of general officers and staff that the course pursued was the only practicable one." However true this statement may be—and there is no reason to question it—it in reality

has nothing to do with the question whether or not McClellan should have assaulted the Yorktown lines. No commander can shield himself behind the opinions or counsel of his staff or of subordinate commanders, for he is solely responsible for his own decision and the results that flow from it. Their function is to furnish facts that come within their observation, and to obey orders even when they are directly opposed to their most pronounced opinions. The responsibilities of the commander are great, but so also are the rewards that follow success, and the question to be considered here is: Would another commander of a different temperament, with all the conditions as they existed on the evening of April 5th, have arrived at the determination to make the assault, and, making it at any time prior to the 10th of April, would he have scored a victory? This leads to an examination of the condition of the Confederates at the time in question.

General Magruder was quite well aware of the weak points in his line, and, while he felt the necessity of presenting a bold front to his adversary, he was exceedingly apprehensive of the result. When McClellan's pickets appeared in front of Yorktown he telegraphed General Lee: "I have made my arrangements to fight my small force, but without the slightest hope of success. If I am re-enforced in time with ten thousand men I think I can block the way to Richmond." Previous to this, however, owing to the uncertainty as to the destination of McClellan, Magruder had received but slight additions to his strength; two Alabama regiments having been sent him on March 24th, and a few companies of cavalry, infantry, and artillery within the next five days.

News had of course been received by the Confederate authorities at Richmond of the passage down the Potomac and Chesapeake Bay of the fleet of transports and of the disembarkation of large bodies of troops at Fort Monroe; but so well had the secret of McClellan's plan been kept that they were in doubt up to the very last moment with regard to his true objective.

Indeed, as late as March 31st, General Lee telegraphed Magruder: "From present indications I think that Norfolk is quite as seriously threatened as the Peninsula, and more probably the object of attack." Such, then, was the uncertainty at Richmond, that on March 27th General Johnston was directed to detach ten thousand of his troops from the line of the Rapidan and send them to Richmond, so that they could, on arrival there, be dispatched either to Huger at Norfolk or to Magruder at Yorktown, according to the necessities of the moment. He was also directed at about the same time to prepare to withdraw all but a strength sufficient to constitute a mere army of observation, and, to guide him in his judgment, General Lee informed him that President Davis had expressed the opinion "that the loss of the central road and communication with the Valley at Staunton would be more injurious than the withdrawal from the Peninsula and the evacuation of Norfolk." In accordance with these instructions, Ewell's division, with a regiment of cavalry, was left in observation on the upper Rappahannock, and he was directed to obey any call for assistance from Jackson, then in the Valley confronting Banks; a mixed force of about brigade strength, taken from G. W. Smith's division, was left in front of Fredericksburg, and the remainder and Longstreet's division were ordered to Richmond; and on the 5th of April Hill's and Early's divisions were ordered to move early in the morning with all possible rapidity to the same point. Thus everything indicated that the Confederate authorities considered the situation a critical one, particularly as McClellan had so placed himself as to threaten both Norfolk and Yorktown, against either of which he was able to bring greatly preponderating forces at his option.

For at least four days after April 5th McClellan had the golden opportunity of a magnificent success within his grasp, but he failed to seize it because he did not perceive it. He failed to see it because he was characteristically non-aggressive as a commander, and in-

stead of organizing a well-supported column of assault to derive the requisite information, he relied upon the personal reconnoissances of his staff, who from the nature of the country and the alertness of the enemy could furnish practically no information of value. From the very instant that the idea of a siege became the predominating one in his mind every advantage that the flank movement by water had put in his possession was sacrificed, and the resulting campaign was doomed to failure and disaster.

The reputation that McClellan enjoyed as an accomplished officer at this time was so high throughout the army that whatever decision he might arrive at would necessarily receive the almost unquestioned support of his subordinate commanders, his staff, and the rank and file of the army. There was a great unanimity in the belief that he had been badly treated by the Administration, and that the retention of McDowell's corps was deliberately intended to minimize his chances of success rather than to provide for the security of Washington, and that the radical element at Washington, operating through the Secretary of War, would neglect no opportunity to interfere with the success of his plans, and some even went so far as to believe that this adverse influence would be willing to sacrifice the army rather than help him to victory. His engaging manner, as exhibited in his personal intercourse with his troops, his martial bearing and skillful horsemanship as he rode the lines of the army, added their influence in sowing the seeds of affection in the hearts of his soldiers that made them trust him, believe in him, and love him. With such confidence and affection he could then have ventured anything with that army and it would not have failed in its response.

Strongly believing that the preliminary operations of a siege would have to be undertaken, McClellan nevertheless ordered reconnoissances to ascertain whether there were any possible favorable points in the line for assault, and these were continued until

the 10th of April, much to the satisfaction of Magruder, who welcomed every day's delay to make his lines stronger and to secure additional re-enforcements. But the character of the country was such that personal reconnoissance could give little information of the strength that the enemy held behind his lines, for they everywhere exhibited an activity that deceived McClellan with respect to the strength of their forces at a time when extraordinary exaggeration was rife and somewhat excusable. And in the meantime, while awaiting the reports of the reconnoitring officers, it was necessary to establish depots of supply, to make them accessible by corduroyed roads, and to locate the various subdivisions of the army with reference to convenience for supply and security against the enemy. The horrible weather that prevailed at this time turned the country into a quagmire and enormously increased the fatiguing and unaccustomed labor to which the troops were subjected, and this injuriously affected their morale, health, and discipline.

Siege operations having finally been determined upon, extensive preparations were necessary to get the landings, roads, and bridges in proper condition, to locate and build the batteries, and to bring the necessary siege material together in accessible depots. Wormley's Creek offered many advantages for this purpose, and it was therefore chosen. Many ravines heading in the close vicinity of Yorktown lead into it, and its mouth, distant only about thirty-five hundred yards from the village, was available under cover of darkness for the unloading of siege material covered from the view of the enemy. The location of the several batteries thought necessary for the reduction of the Yorktown defenses was determined upon after a careful preliminary study of the ground, and their construction was begun on the 17th of April. The enormous labor required in their erection as well as that for the betterment of the roads, the construction of bridges, landings, wharves, etc., was necessarily performed by the troops, and they were unceasingly engaged upon it

until the evacuation of Yorktown by the enemy. The siege works comprised fourteen batteries and four redoubts with their connecting parallels, with an armament of two 200-pounders, twelve 100-pounders, twelve 30-pounders, thirty-two 20-pounders, twelve 4.5-inch rifles, ten 13-inch seacoast mortars, ten 10-inch, fifteen 10-inch, and seven 8-inch siege mortars, and two 8-inch siege howitzers, making a total of one hundred and fourteen pieces of heavy siege artillery.

In all this work General McClellan took the greatest personal and professional interest. He watched the development of the siege operations from day to day, anxious to bring them to a successful conclusion, and drawing upon his own study of the siege of Sevastopol for devices to hasten and improve this development. In order to expedite the work and systematize the labor and responsibility to better advantage, General Fitz-John Porter was made director of the siege, April 27th, and, becoming responsible thereafter, was required to report twice daily to the commanding general to receive instructions.

Meanwhile the army in bivouac covered the line from the York to the James; the right wing, under Heintzelman, consisting of Porter's, Hooker's, and Hamilton's divisions, extended, in the order named, from Wormley's Creek to the Warwick road at Wynn's Mill; while the left wing, under Sumner, consisting of Sedgwick's, Smith's, Couch's, and Casey's divisions, extended the line to the James near the mouth of the Warwick. By the 10th of April, at which time Casey's, Hooker's, and Richardson's divisions had joined, or were near at hand, the strength of the army, present and absent, was over one hundred thousand men. With the exception of the attack by Smith's division at Dam No. 1, on the 16th of April, no aggressive movement of any importance occurred during the progress of the siege. In this affair it was the intention to push a strong reconnoissance on the enemy's line at this point in order to ascertain his strength there, the character of his works, and to put a stop

to the construction of a battery; also to sustain the reconnoitring party by a real attack if found expedient, so as to obtain a lodgment on the other side of the Warwick at this point. Smith began the movement of the brigades of his division at six o'clock to protect his flanks against a possible counter attack, and to support the light batteries of his division advanced to the front. While this was in progress and the batteries were delivering an overwhelming fire upon the three pieces of the enemy, Lieutenant Noyes crossed the creek and advanced sufficiently far to ascertain that the enemy's rifle pits could readily be taken. This being reported to Smith, he obtained from General McClellan, who was then present on the field, permission to cross over a small body of infantry to verify this information, and instructed its commander, if successful, to signal the fact so that supports might be sent over to secure the position. Four companies of Colonel Hyde's Third Vermont were selected. They succeeded in crossing and taking possession of the enemy's rifle pits, which they held for about forty minutes; but information of this success did not reach the brigade commander in time to be made of use, so that their heroic action did not bear the fruit worthy of their intrepidity and sacrifice. The Confederate troops defending the dam were for a time thrown into confusion, which, had it been taken due advantage of, would have resulted in breaking their line and might have forced the abandonment of the whole line of the Warwick. They, however, quickly rallied, bringing three regiments against the four companies, and the latter were compelled very reluctantly to withdraw. This partial success emboldened General Smith to make a second attempt later in the afternoon, and at five o'clock the Sixth Vermont, supported by a portion of the Fourth Vermont, moved forward to the attack. The enemy had, however, now concentrated three brigades to meet this advance, which was speedily stopped, and this repulse brought an end to the day's conflict. The loss on the Union side amounted to one

hundred and sixty-five in killed, wounded, and missing, the greater portion falling upon the Vermont regiments engaged. This was in reality another lost opportunity to break the enemy's line which had been made possible by the splendid behavior of the troops, but which unfortunately had not been provided for by the major general commanding as among the possibilities of the day.

It may be well now to inquire what were the relations existing between McClellan and the Administration during this month of siege. It is useless to deny the fact that Stanton had about lost confidence in him even as early as April 6th, for on that day he asks of General Wool: "Please let me know fully the state of operations toward Yorktown, and whether it is necessary to send more than Sumner's corps, which is on the way down," thus allowing the opinion of a junior and an independent commander to influence his decision upon a request for re-enforcements. We now know that McClellan continually magnified the strength of the enemy, and based his request for re-enforcements upon his erroneous assumptions, asking first for the First Corps, but saying that if for any reason not known to him this could not be granted, to send him Franklin's division. In answer to this the President tells him: "You now have over one hundred thousand men independent of Wool. I think you had better break the enemy's line from Yorktown to Warwick River at once. They will probably use time as advantageously as you can." This brought a reply from McClellan to the effect that when all his troops joined he would only have eighty-five thousand men for duty, and that at present he had but fifty-three thousand, but that the balance was coming as rapidly as the means of transportation would allow. This discrepancy is not clearly accounted for by the general, for the returns of April 13th, a week thereafter, show a total present and absent of one hundred and seventeen thousand seven hundred and twenty-one; an aggregate absent of twelve thousand four hun-

dred and eighty-six; an aggregate on special duty, sick, and in arrest of forty-two hundred and sixty-five; leaving a total present for duty of one hundred thousand nine hundred and seventy. His dispatch to Stanton on the 7th of April is most depressing in its tone, and gives but little prospect that any satisfactory progress can be made. He says: "The whole line of the Warwick, which really heads within a mile of Yorktown, is strongly defended by detached redoubts and other fortifications, armed with heavy and light guns. The approaches, except at Yorktown, are covered by the Warwick, over which there is but one, or, at most, two passages, both of which are covered by strong batteries. It will be necessary to resort to the use of heavy guns and some siege operations before we can assault. All the prisoners state that General J. E. Johnston arrived in Yorktown yesterday with strong re-enforcements. It seems clear that I shall have the whole force of the enemy on my hands, probably not less than one hundred thousand (100,000) men, and possibly more. In consequence of the loss of Blenker's division and the First Corps, my force is possibly less than that of the enemy, while they have all the advantage of position.

"I am under great obligation to you for the offer that the whole force and material of the Government will be as fully and speedily under my command as heretofore, or as if the new departments had not been created.

"Since my arrangements were made for this campaign, at least fifty thousand men have been taken from my command.

"Since my dispatch of the 5th instant five divisions have been in close observation of the enemy, and frequently exchanging shots. When my present command all joins I shall have about eighty-five thousand men for duty, from which a large force must be taken for guards, escorts, etc. With this army I could assault the enemy's works, and perhaps carry them, but were I in possession of their intrenchments, and assailed by

double my numbers, I should have no fears as to the result.

"Under the circumstances that have been developed since my arrival here, I feel fully impressed with the conviction that here is to be fought the great battle that is to decide the existing contest. I shall, of course, commence the attack as soon as I can get up my siege train, and shall do all in my power to carry the enemy's works; but to do this with a reasonable degree of certainty, requires, in my judgment, that I should, if possible, have at least the whole of the First Corps to land upon the Severn River, and attack Gloucester in the rear. My present strength will not admit of a detachment sufficient for the purpose, without materially impairing the efficiency of this column."

The reply of Mr. Lincoln to these dispatches, though kindly in tone, was characteristically indicative of his irritation at the prospect of interminable delay, foreshadowed by the plan that McClellan seemed to adopt. He says:

MY DEAR SIR: Your dispatches, complaining that you are not properly sustained, while they do not offend me, do pain me very much.

Blenker's division was withdrawn from you before you left here, and you know the pressure under which I did it, and, as I thought, acquiesced in it—certainly not without reluctance.

After you left I ascertained that less than twenty thousand unorganized men, without a single field battery, were all you designed to be left for the defense of Washington and Manassas Junction, and part of this even was to go to General Hooker's old position. General Banks's corps, once designed for Manassas Junction, was diverted and tied up on the line of Winchester and Strasburg, and could not leave it without again exposing the upper Potomac and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. This presented, or would present when McDowell and Sumner should be gone, a great temptation to the enemy to turn back from the Rappahannock and sack Washington. My explicit order that Washington should, by the judgment of all the commanders of army corps, be left entirely secure, had been neglected. It was precisely this that drove me to detain McDowell.

I do not forget that I was satisfied with your arrangement to leave Banks at Manassas Junction; but when that

arrangement was broken up and nothing was substituted for it, of course I was constrained to substitute something for it myself. And allow me to ask, Do you really think I should permit the line from Richmond *via* Manassas Junction to this city to be entirely open except what resistance could be presented by less than twenty thousand unorganized troops? This is a question which the country will not allow me to evade.

There is a curious mystery about the number of troops now with you. When I telegraphed you on the 6th, saying you had over one hundred thousand with you, I had just obtained from the Secretary of War a statement, taken, as he said, from your own returns, making one hundred and eight thousand then with you and *en route* to you. You now say you will have but eighty-five thousand when all *en route* to you shall have reached you. How can the discrepancy of twenty-three thousand be accounted for?

As to General Wool's command, I understand it is doing for you precisely what a like number of your own would have to do if that command was away.

I suppose the whole force which has gone forward to you is with you by this time, and, if so, I think it is the precise time for you to strike a blow. By delay the enemy will relatively gain upon you—that is, he will gain faster by fortifications and re-enforcements than you can by re-enforcements alone. And once more let me tell you it is indispensable to you that you strike a blow. I am powerless to help this. You will do me the justice to remember I always insisted that going down the bay in search of a field, instead of fighting at or near Manassas, was only shifting and not surmounting a difficulty; that we would find the same enemy and the same or equal intrenchments at either place. The country will not fail to note, is now noting, that the present hesitation to move upon an intrenched enemy is but the story of Manassas repeated.

I beg to assure you that I have never written you or spoken to you in greater kindness of feeling than now, nor with a fuller purpose to sustain you, so far as, in my most anxious judgment, I consistently can. But you must act.

From this time on McClellan was persistent in his appeals for re-enforcements, especially for Franklin's and McCall's divisions. On April 10th he telegraphs Stanton: "Reconnoissance to-day proves that it is necessary to invest and attack Gloucester Point. Give me Franklin's and McCall's divisions and I will at once undertake it. If circumstances of which I am not aware make it impossible for you to send me two

divisions to carry out this final plan of campaign, I will run the risk and hold myself responsible for the results if you will give me Franklin's division. If you still confide in my judgment I entreat that you will grant this request. The fate of our cause depends upon it. Although willing under the pressure of necessity to carry this through with Franklin alone, I wish it to be distinctly understood that I think two divisions are necessary. Franklin and his division are indispensable to me. . . ." Under this pressing importunity the Administration finally yielded, and Franklin was directed to embark his division for service in the Peninsula. Including Franklin's division, the strength of the Army of the Potomac, as exhibited by the returns of April 30th, was, for duty, one hundred and nine thousand three hundred and thirty-five; sick, fifty-six hundred and eighteen; in arrest and confinement, three hundred and ninety-seven; absent, eleven thousand and thirty-seven; a total of one hundred and twenty-six thousand three hundred and eighty-seven.

To return now to the plans of the Confederates. After General Johnston had completed his inspection of the Yorktown lines he clearly perceived that it was only a question of time when McClellan's superior artillery would force the abandonment of the Confederate position under circumstances that might be disastrous. He therefore hastened to Richmond to propose a change of plan to President Davis, which seemed to the latter of such importance that he called together the Secretary of War, General Randolph, and Generals Lee, Longstreet, and G. W. Smith, to discuss it with General Johnston. The latter pointed out that while Magruder had been successful in delaying McClellan's advance up the Peninsula, yet his arrangements would not enable the Confederates to defeat McClellan, and that there was a strong probability that the latter, with his superior artillery, would soon demolish the defenses of Yorktown and Gloucester, open the York River to his gunboats and transports, and thus place himself in so favorable a position in their

rear as to threaten the fall of Richmond. Instead, therefore, of merely delaying the advance of the Union army, he proposed that all of the available forces of the Confederacy then in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, those at Norfolk, and on the Peninsula, and the troops then arriving at Richmond from the Army of Northern Virginia, should be collected together into a single army and give battle to McClellan at some selected favorable point in the vicinity of Richmond. In his opinion the result would be an overwhelming defeat for the Union army taken at a disadvantage, over a hundred miles from its base at Fort Monroe, and be decisive of the war.

The proposition was long and thoroughly discussed. Lee opposed it because it would subject the important seaports of Charleston and Savannah to capture, and because he believed the Peninsula offered excellent fields of battle for a small army contending against a large one. Randolph also opposed it because its adoption would enforce the abandonment of Norfolk and the loss of the navy yard there. Johnston and Smith supported the plan, and Longstreet was silent. Mr. Davis closed the conference by deciding against it, and thereupon directed Johnston to proceed to the Peninsula to carry out the present arrangements, and gave orders for Smith's and Longstreet's divisions to the same destination. Johnston assumed command of the Peninsula, and claims that when Smith's and Longstreet's divisions reported to him his strength amounted to fifty-three thousand men, including three thousand sick. He at once took measures to complete and strengthen the works of defense, especially the weak portion between the head of the Warwick and Yorktown, which had so far been the most noticeably neglected.

His purpose was now to hold on to his position to the last moment consistent with the safety of his army. He recognized that he always had a secure line of retreat unless this was cut by the sudden passage of the York River, which would enable McClellan

to interpose a strong force in his rear while in the delicate operation of a retreat. He did not intend to subject his army to the casualties of the formidable bombardment that day by day became impending, and accordingly, on the night of the 3d of May, he gave the necessary directions for the troops to withdraw from their defenses while the heavy artillery was to continue its fire until two o'clock the next morning. So successfully was this arrangement carried out that McClellan did not discover the abandonment until dawn of the 4th, and by that time the bulk of Johnston's forces were in the vicinity of Williamsburg.

McClellan expected to be ready to open his bombardment by the 6th of May at the latest, and although many of his batteries were ready for action before this time, he preferred to delay awaiting the completion of all, in order that the volume of fire should be overwhelming and as destructive as possible.

In a home letter, dated 12.30 A. M., May 3d, McClellan says: "After the hot firing of to-day everything is so unusually still that I am a little suspicious that our friends may intend a sortie; so I have taken all the steps necessary to be ready for them, and am sitting up for a while to await developments. . . . I don't half like the perfect quietness which reigns now. . . . It don't seem natural. It looks like a sortie or an evacuation. If either, I hope it may be the former. . . ." Had he then taken counsel of his suspicions and designated a division of infantry to be held in light marching order for immediate service, the grievous and bitter disappointment caused by the evacuation of Yorktown on the morning of the 4th might have been mitigated by the happy results that would have attended a vigorous and rapid pursuit. But the enemy succeeded in getting away without loss of morale, men, or supplies, except only the heavy artillery in position and other *matériel* that is necessarily abandoned in a leisurely retreat. Not anticipating this movement McClellan was not prepared for immediate pursuit, and the main body of the enemy had

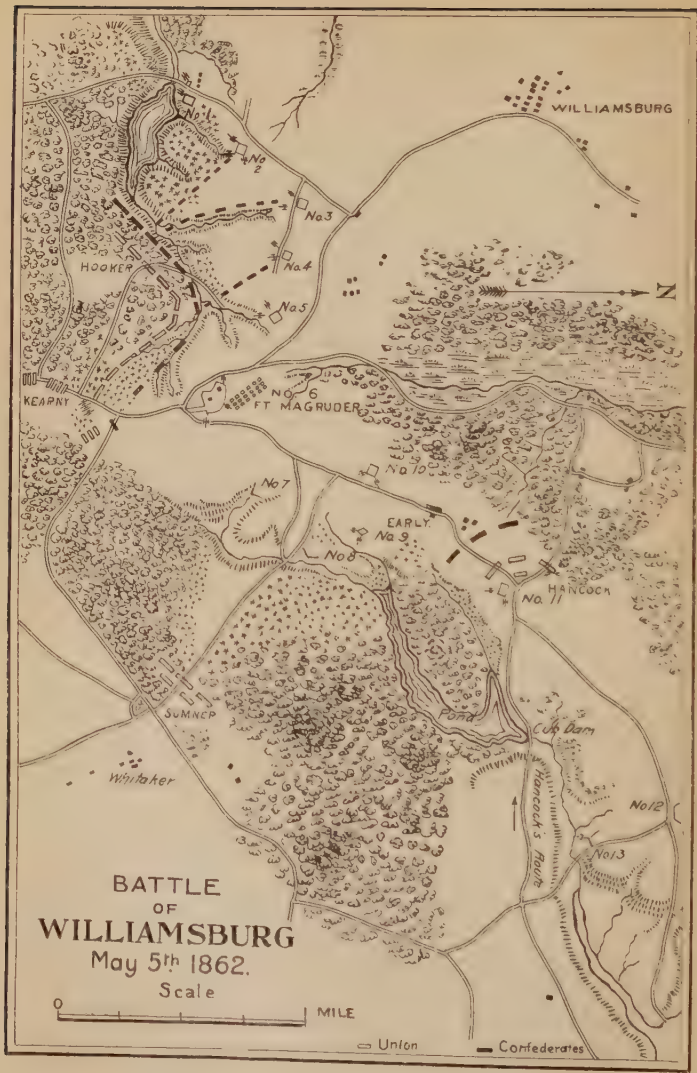
therefore the advantage of a start of about twelve hours. Although the evacuation of Yorktown was a disappointment, orders were at once issued directing General Stoneman to take up the pursuit as soon as possible with all the available cavalry, consisting of the First and Sixth Regulars, the Eighth Illinois, Third Pennsylvania, and Barker's squadron, and four batteries of horse artillery, following the Yorktown road to the Halfway House and there endeavor to reach the rear of that part of the enemy which had been reported as retreating on the Lee's Mill road. Hooker's division was directed to follow Stoneman as a support; Kearny's division to be held in readiness, and Heintzelman, the corps commander, to control the entire movement. General Sumner, in command of the left wing, was directed to repair the bridges over the Warwick as speedily as possible so as to cross the Fifth United States Cavalry, Smith's and Couch's divisions, and Casey's, if necessary, and push his advance along the Lee's Mill road, driving the enemy, but not to attack until Stoneman could get in their rear; Sedgwick's and Richardson's divisions to be held in readiness subject to the orders of the commanding general in expectation of being needed to support the right column, Porter's division to move to Yorktown, and Franklin's, which had been disembarked on the preceding day at Cheeseman's landing, to re-embark as soon as possible.

These dispositions of the several divisions of the army would seem to be judicious, and as McClellan had no reason to expect that any resistance would be offered other than that of a rear guard disputing the Union advance at every favorable opportunity, he confided the management of the pursuit to General Sumner, the next officer in rank to himself, while he, justly regarding the flank movement to be the more important, remained at Yorktown to expedite the embarkation of the designated troops. For his action in remaining at Yorktown he has been severely criticised, because of the tactical mismanagement of the

Union troops at Williamsburg, but, in his own justification, he claims that he had every reason to expect that with five divisions at hand and two others within supporting distance Sumner ought not to have failed to score a victory.

To carry out the orderly movement of the various parts of an army of a hundred thousand men in accordance with a well-digested plan is a problem of no small magnitude, even with a most competent and thoroughly instructed staff. How much greater were the difficulties in the present unexpected emergency can very well be imagined when we recall the condition of the army when the evacuation was made known. Many of the troops had been on fatigue duty in the trenches during the night, and neither rations nor transportation were ready in a single division for an immediate movement, as is shown by the report of every division and corps commander. Owing to this condition of unreadiness for the march Stoneman did not leave Yorktown until ten o'clock, and Hooker did not get well under way until near one o'clock; Smith's leading brigade, preceded by Chambliss's squadron, somewhat more prompt, reached Skiff Creek about 10.30, to find that the Confederate rear guard of cavalry, under Stuart, had blocked his farther advance on this road by burning Lee's Bridge over Skiff Creek. The last of the Confederate infantry from the Yorktown lines had passed within the line held by this rear guard shortly after daybreak, and Stuart's cavalry presented a screen extending from Skiff Creek to the York River, covering the two main roads leading to Williamsburg.

Stoneman moved rapidly, and about noon, at a difficult crossing on the Yorktown road, came in contact with a portion of Stuart's force, under the command of Colonel Wickham, which was, however, quickly driven off by Gibson's battery. Here General Emory, with a regiment and a squadron of cavalry and a battery, was sent over to the Lee's Mill road to intercept the enemy whom General Smith was supposed to be driv-


WILLIAMSBURG
No 1
No 2
No 3
HOOKER
No 4
No 5
N
KEARNY
No 6
FT MAGRUDER
No 7
No 10
EARLY
No 9
No 8
HANCOCK
No 11
SUMNER
Pond
Mill Dam
Whitaker
Hancock's Road
No 12
No 13
BATTLE
OF
WILLIAMSBURG
May 5th 1862.
Scale
0
MILE
Union
Confederates

ing on that road, while the remainder of Stoneman's command, under General Cooke, hastened toward Williamsburg. In a narrow wood road on his way to the left Emory was attacked by a small detachment of Stuart's cavalry, under Colonel Goode, which after a spirited contest was driven off, but the delay incident thereto enabled Stuart to make good his escape with his command by the Beach road bordering the James River, the only route then available. Cooke's advanced guard, proceeding rapidly, soon came in view of the line of redoubts in front of Williamsburg, and there he perceived that the enemy on the plateau displayed such superior strength in numbers and position that any attack by his cavalry alone would be futile. Nevertheless, as he expected that the infantry supports would soon arrive, and as he had been empowered by Stoneman to attack at discretion, he threw forward a section of Gibson's battery near the junction of the roads and opened fire, at the same time sending Major Williams with four squadrons of the Sixth Cavalry by a road to the right to attack on that flank. After about an hour's contest, during which there were several spirited cavalry charges, Cooke was obliged to retire from his advanced position after suffering a considerable loss in men and horses, and was also obliged to abandon one gun of Gibson's battery which had become so deeply mired that it could not be extricated.

General Johnston had concentrated his army at Williamsburg at midday on the 4th, but had not intended to delay his retreat to fight a battle, as he knew full well that McClellan would hasten his transports up the York River and endeavor to strike the flank of his column while in retreat and capture or destroy his trains. Finding, however, that his trains were making slow progress, and in order to gain time for their better advancement, he ordered Semmes's brigade of McLaws's division, which was then about entering Williamsburg, to countermarch and occupy Fort Magruder and its adjacent redoubts. This was about one

o'clock, and two hours later, hearing of Stoneman's approach, he also ordered the return of Kershaw's brigade and Manly's battery of the same division, and it was this force that effectually interposed itself as an obstacle to Cooke's troopers. Had there been a division of Union infantry promptly on the ground to support Stoneman it is quite likely that Fort Magruder might have been seized before the Confederates could have reached it, and the battle of the next day, had there been one, would have had a very different result.

To follow now the movements of the Union infantry divisions, it will be remembered that Smith had reached the arm of Skiff Creek at half past ten o'clock, where he was halted by a peremptory order of Sumner, who had at noon, by General McClellan's direction, been placed in charge of operations connected with the pursuit, although Heintzelman had not been notified of the change. Sumner, coming up about two o'clock, directed Smith to move over to the Yorktown road and proceed by that road to the support of Stoneman's advanced guard. Smith's division filed into this road just before Hooker's reached the point of intersection, and the latter was compelled to halt until Smith's had passed, involving a delay of several hours. Sumner, accompanying Smith's division and apparently not concerning himself with the troops in rear, hastened forward with the design of putting Smith's division into action that afternoon, under the impression, derived from Stoneman, that the enemy had but a small force in his front. But it was half past six o'clock before the organization of Smith's division in battle formation was effected in the woods that screened the Confederate position, and the quick-falling darkness, together with the difficult nature of the ground, prevented his design from being accomplished.

In the meantime, Hooker, impatient and restive under his enforced detention, and finding that the road he was following was filled with troops, sought and obtained permission from General Heintzelman, his corps commander, to cross to the Lee's Mill road, and thus it

was that Smith's and Hooker's divisions interchanged their routes of march and confusion was first introduced. Hooker, with his characteristic ardor, pressed the march, hoping to come up with the enemy before morning. "This," he says, "I soon found would be impossible, for the roads were frightful, the night intensely dark and rainy, and many of my men exhausted from loss of sleep and from labor the night before in the trenches. The troops were halted in the middle of the road between ten and eleven o'clock P. M., resolved to stop until daylight, when we started again, and came in sight of the enemy's works before Williamsburg about half past five o'clock in the morning."

Smith's and Hooker's divisions were thus on separate roads, which, however, united a short distance in front of Fort Magruder, but on the night in question there was no communication between the two divisions owing to the interposition of a dense wood and some marshy ground. Casey's and Couch's divisions had reached the vicinity of the Halfway House, where they bivouacked in the rain during the night, and Kearny's division was in bivouac about two or three miles from Yorktown.

Sumner's intention to attack with Smith's division early in the morning was changed during the night by the reflection that perhaps the enemy might be considerably stronger than Stoneman had reported, and besides, he had ascertained that a part of this division had marched without rations. He concluded therefore to pause a little and consider a change of plan. Smith was ordered to withdraw his division to the hither edge of the woods for the present, that it might obtain rations and knapsacks. Keyes and Heintzelman, the other two corps commanders, were present the next morning, and at the suggestion of the former an informal consultation was held by Sumner to consider the situation. Information having been received that some of the enemy's redoubts on their left had not been re-occupied it was decided to verify this fact, and, if true, to make an attack by that flank. A reconnois-

sance under Captain Stewart, of the Engineers, was ordered, and by half past ten o'clock Sumner was informed that the plan was feasible. Hancock was selected to command the flanking force, and he succeeded in getting to his destination at about twelve o'clock, but as he did not become seriously engaged with the enemy until after five o'clock, we shall leave him for the present and direct our attention to what was happening upon the left of the Union line.

Hooker's division was on the Lee's Mill road by virtue of the permission granted the evening before by Heintzelman, who then understood that he was in "control of the entire movement." Hooker himself had no specific instructions to bring on a battle, but was authorized to make a demonstration against the enemy. In justification of his subsequent action he says: "Being in pursuit of a retreating army, I deemed it my duty to lose no time in making the disposition of my forces to attack, regardless of their number and position, except to accomplish the result with the least possible sacrifice of life. By so doing, my division, if it did not capture the army before me, would at least hold them, in order that some others might. Besides, I knew of the presence of more than thirty thousand troops not two miles distant from me, and that within twelve miles—four hours' march—was the bulk of the Army of the Potomac. My own position was tenable for double that length of time against three times my number." However commendable this bold and aggressive spirit of a division commander may be, Hooker was not justified in assuming the rôle of an independent commander at this juncture, especially as he knew of the presence of his corps commander on the field, who had limited his action to making a demonstration merely. Notwithstanding the corps organization of the army, it will be seen that the battle was fought by subordinate commanders acting somewhat independently, and to comprehend this a brief reference to the map is all that is necessary.

A branch of Queen's Creek from the east and one

of College Creek from the west head very near each other just in front of Fort Magruder, and encircle the elevated and partially cleared plateau upon which General Magruder had established his third line of defense just in front of Williamsburg. This consisted of Fort Magruder, the principal work, covering the junction of the two roads from Yorktown and Lee's Mill, and thirteen other redoubts, five on the west and eight on the east, each being so placed as to cover its special avenue of possible approach, and the whole in defensive relations with each other and the ground in their front. The timber within a circumference of a mile radius from the redoubts had been slashed to give their guns a sufficient range and to make a difficult abatis, and slashings had also been made for the width of half a mile along the edges of the two main roads before they joined in front of Fort Magruder. Upon the right flank a road from King's Mill Wharf and Allen's Farm crossed a mill pond just in front of the most westerly redoubt, but nevertheless offered the most feasible route for an attack by this flank. A similar road on the Confederate left crossed Cub Dam Creek, and it was by this avenue that Hancock was enabled to place himself in so favorable a position owing to the fact that the redoubt covering the crossing had not been occupied by the enemy that morning. The position in which Hooker found himself upon emerging from the Lee's Mill road was in front of the redoubts on the west of Fort Magruder, having in his front a difficult ravine covered with slashed timber, and having all the lateral ravines under the direct fire of the several redoubts—the most difficult of all possible approaches from which to deliver an attack. A cleared belt about six hundred yards wide, dotted all over with rifle pits, intervened between the felled timber and the general line of the redoubts.

From his cheerless bivouac Hooker had pushed forward early on the morning of the 5th, Grover's brigade leading, and his skirmishers were in action before six o'clock. He himself hastened to the front

to learn something of the position, but the dense woods prevented him from getting much information. The four regiments of Grover's brigade were deployed about half past seven o'clock, and under cover of this screen Webber's battery was pushed forward to a little clearing on the right of the road, but no sooner did it emerge from the cover of the woods than it was assailed by so destructive a fire from Fort Magruder, and by the sharpshooters in front, that its gunners abandoned it before a single gun could be brought into action. Volunteers from the men of Osborn's battery gallantly remanned it, and shortly afterward Bramhall's battery coming into action on its right, their combined fire, together with the fire from the skirmishers of Grover's brigade, soon drove the enemy's pickets back to the cover of their redoubts and silenced the Confederate artillery. Up to nine o'clock every attempt on the part of the Confederates to re-establish their picket line and artillery fire was frustrated, for Anderson's command, occupying the redoubts, was overmatched by the two brigades that Hooker had established in its front. At this time the Union line, extending from the woods on the left of the road to the vicinity of the Yorktown road, comprised the following regiments in order: The Eighth, Seventh, and Sixth New Jersey, of Patterson's brigade—the Fifth New Jersey, the remaining regiment of this brigade, being posted as a support to Webber's and Bramhall's batteries near the center of his line; the First Massachusetts, Second New Hampshire, Eleventh Massachusetts, and Twenty-sixth Pennsylvania of Grover's brigade. The Confederates had Anderson's and Pryor's brigades in the redoubts or in their immediate neighborhood, comprising the following regiments from right to left: The Eighth and Fourteenth Alabama, Fourteenth Louisiana, and a battalion of the Thirty-second Virginia, of Pryor's brigade; the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth South Carolina, a battalion of Louisiana Rifles, and the Palmetto sharpshooters of Anderson's brigade, mainly under cover of the four redoubts

to the west of Fort Magruder and two to the east, as well as Fort Magruder itself. They were simply on the defensive up to nine o'clock, awaiting the arrival of the brigades of Wilcox, A. P. Hill, Pickett, and Colston, which had been ordered back from Williamsburg to meet the strong pressure that Hooker was exerting, and which threatened to drive the Confederate rear guard back in confusion upon the trains that were then experiencing great difficulty in retiring over the muddy road leading out of Williamsburg.

Up to this time Hooker had carried out his design of making a demonstration on the enemy, but as there had been no attack in force, General Johnston received the impression that Hooker's movement was only intended to delay him and annoy his rear until McClellan could reach his flank by way of York River. He had therefore determined to send back the remainder of Longstreet's division and attack Hooker, or at least hold him off until he had gained sufficient time to insure the safety of his trains. For this purpose Wilcox was ordered to countermarch at seven o'clock, and A. P. Hill and Pickett at eight o'clock to go to the assistance of Anderson. At about nine o'clock Anderson ordered Wilcox across the ravine in front of the redoubts into the woods, where the Jersey brigade had shortly before been deployed. Taking advantage of the lateral ravines to cover the crossing of his troops, Wilcox advanced in line with the Nineteenth Mississippi in the center, the Tenth Alabama on his right, and the Ninth Alabama on his left, penetrated the woods, and came upon the left, center, and flank of Hooker's line. Pryor, with two regiments of his brigade, came up on Wilcox's right, and at about half past ten o'clock A. P. Hill's brigade came into action on Pryor's right, and was followed by Pickett's still farther to the right of the Confederate line; Colston's brigade and the remainder of Pryor's joining on the right of Pickett, while Wilcox was bearing to his left and Anderson firing from the redoubts, the whole constituted so preponderating a force in favor of the Confederates upon the Union

front, with a continued overlapping of the Union left, as to force Hooker from his advanced position to the felled timber near the road. Hooker's other brigade, Taylor's, comprising the Seventieth, Seventy-second, Seventy-third, and Seventy-fourth New York, somewhat delayed in reaching the field, did not become fully engaged much before one o'clock. In the meantime the troops on the battle front, from long-continued action, had nearly exhausted their ammunition, and at about eleven o'clock the Seventy-second was sent in to relieve the First Massachusetts fighting on the left of the road, and they in turn were relieved at one o'clock by the Seventieth; the other two regiments of Taylor's brigade, first sent to relieve the three regiments of the New Jersey brigade, were returned to the road before being able to do so, in order to meet at a critical time the constantly increasing pressure on that part of the line. Webber's and Bramhall's batteries were abandoned at about half past twelve o'clock, the cannoneers being driven from them by the increasing fire of the enemy and the impossibility of withdrawing the guns owing to the losses sustained in horses and the miry condition of the ground. The constantly increasing strength of the Confederate line brought greater pressure upon Patterson's and Taylor's brigades and the left of Grover's, so that the Union left was gradually forced into the tangled undergrowth and felled timber on the left of the road, until about two o'clock a charge of the enemy forced the Union line into the woods to the rear of the positions occupied by the batteries, which then fell into the hands of the Ninth Alabama. Up to this time Hooker had received no assistance, and the enemy, looking for a rout, were preparing to follow up their success with a cavalry charge by Stuart's troopers. But just at this time Peck's brigade of Couch's division became engaged on Hooker's right, and Kearny's division was reported near at hand, giving material encouragement to the almost exhausted men of Hooker's division.

Kearny's division began its march from its bivouac,

nearly nine miles to the rear of Hooker, at nine o'clock, but upon receiving orders at a quarter to eleven o'clock to pass everything in his front and hasten to the aid of Hooker, he pushed his division through the confused mass of troops and trains that encumbered the muddy Yorktown road until he reached the Brick Church, where his route diverged to the Lee's Mill road. Discarding knapsacks when within three miles of the battlefield, he was able to re-enforce Hooker between three and four o'clock in the afternoon, in time to prevent the enemy from reaping the reward of their vigorous onset. The Fifth Michigan and the Thirty-seventh New York of Berry's brigade were deployed to the left of the road, and the Thirty-eighth and Fortieth New York of Birney's brigade to the right, covering their front with two companies of the Second Michigan deployed as skirmishers. The Union line thus strengthened soon began to gain ground, and ultimately forced the enemy from his advanced position in the captured batteries. Darkness soon falling, the firing ceased and the battle on the left was ended.

The vigorous resistance offered by the troops of Hooker's and Kearny's divisions that were actively engaged is best attested by their losses. In Hooker's division the aggregate loss was fifteen hundred and five, of which two hundred and fifty-three belonged to Grover's brigade, five hundred and twenty-six to Patterson's, and seven hundred and seventy-two to Taylor's; and in Kearny's division of the aggregate loss of four hundred and sixteen, distributed among five regiments, two hundred and ninety-nine belonged to Berry's and one hundred and seventeen to Birney's brigade. The official report, compiled from incomplete returns, gives the aggregate loss of the Confederate brigades engaged with Hooker and Kearny as ten hundred and fifty-two, which, however underestimated it may be, is sufficient to show the desperate character of the contest on this portion of the field.

Let us now return to the right to follow Hancock's movement. With five regiments—the Fifth Wiscon-

sin, the Forty-ninth Pennsylvania, and the Sixth Maine of his own brigade, the Seventh Maine and Thirty-third New York of Davidson's brigade, and Cowan's six-gun battery—he occupied the abandoned redoubt overlooking Saunders's Pond on Cub Dam Creek without opposition, and reported the fact to his division commander, General Smith, at about noon. With clear vision he saw the importance of his position, reported the practicability of securing substantial advantage, and asked for an additional brigade. Receiving information that four regiments and a battery would be sent him, he advanced his line and occupied another redoubt and opened a skirmish and artillery fire upon the enemy occupying two redoubts in his front. After a considerable delay he received word from General Sumner that he could not be re-enforced, and was directed to withdraw to his first position and maintain himself there. Still unwilling to yield until the last moment he again sent urgent representations to his division commander, who likewise recommended that he be re-enforced; but Sumner, anticipating an attack on the remainder of Smith's division, and fearing to weaken it further, again directed the retirement of Hancock to the first redoubt. But before this last message came back to Hancock the enemy was observed near at hand, preparing to attack him. There had been some slight skirmishing between Hancock and a portion of Colonel Jenkins's command, which was garrisoning the two left redoubts during the afternoon, and Hancock's movements were being observed by the Jeff Davis Legion of cavalry, but there had been no considerable body of infantry in Hancock's front during the afternoon, as the Confederate attention had been wholly occupied in the battle going on with Hooker on their right.

At about three o'clock in the afternoon Longstreet had asked that the division of D. H. Hill be sent to his assistance, and Early's brigade, followed by those of Rains, Featherston, and Rodes, were promptly countermarched from their positions a short distance

in front of Williamsburg and concentrated in rear and to the Confederate left of Fort Magruder. Two regiments of Early's brigade—the Second Florida and the Mississippi Battalion—were sent to re-enforce Anderson, and the remaining four were organized for an attack upon Hancock in expectation of being able to capture his battery that had been firing upon the redoubts, and which General Early very much coveted. This attacking force consisted of the Twenty-fourth and Thirty-eighth Virginia, under the immediate charge of General Early, as a left wing, and the Twenty-third and Fifth North Carolina as a right wing, under the personal direction of General D. H. Hill. The line of battle was formed in a wheat field under cover of a piece of woods, through which it was to advance into the open field in front of Hancock; but on emerging, only the two flank regiments were found in position, the other two through indifferent leadership and poor discipline having crowded too much to the left to be available for the attack which the impetuous Early immediately undertook. The gallant colonel of the Fifth North Carolina, seeing Early attack with the Twenty-fourth Virginia alone, marched his regiment from the extreme right across the open field to his assistance, and the Sixth South Carolina emerging from the redoubts operated against Hancock's left flank. Hancock's position was well chosen, and although the Confederates displayed magnificent courage, their attack was met with such a severe musketry and artillery fire followed by a bayonet charge that their lines were broken and they were driven from the field in disorder. Hancock lost ninety-five men, of which seventy-nine belonged to the Fifth Wisconsin alone, while the enemy lost five hunded and thirty. Being without re-enforcements, and night approaching, Hancock did not deem it prudent to pursue, but occupied his troops in securing his position and in caring for the dead and wounded on the field of battle.

Hooker's battle on the left and Hancock's on the right were thus separate and independent affairs, with

regard to which Sumner, the commanding general, apparently exercised no directing influence. The brunt of the fighting on the left up till two o'clock had in reality fallen upon ten of the twelve regiments of Hooker's division, at which time four regiments of Peck's brigade, Couch's division, became engaged, and between three and four o'clock five of the twelve regiments of Kearny's, or in all twenty-one regiments, were so seriously engaged during some portion of the day as to indicate by the severity of their losses that they were actively at work on the fighting line. In the five divisions under the command of Sumner there were, in Smith's, thirteen regiments; in Hooker's, twelve; in Kearny's, twelve; in Couch's, fourteen; and in Casey's, thirteen; in all, sixty-four regiments. Adding the five regiments of Hancock which were engaged to the twenty-one engaged on the left, there remain thirty-eight which do not seem to have been utilized for battle, but it is proper to remark that five of this number were under fire for a short time, their aggregate loss, however, being not more than twenty men. To understand how this came about it will be necessary to refer to the movements of the various fractions of the army during the day.

Smith's division, with the exception of the five regiments with Hancock, remained continuously in position in front of Whitaker's throughout the day and was not engaged. Casey's division arrived within a mile and a half of the front at 10.30 A. M., where he was directed to remain by General Sumner and endeavor to get up some subsistence for the men. About one o'clock he was ordered by his corps commander, General Keyes, to advance to the front, and while preparing to do so he received orders from Sumner to move to the support of Hooker on the left. After proceeding three miles in the attempt to execute this order, he was overtaken while accompanying his leading brigade (Naglee's) by an express directing him to obey his first order from General Keyes. He promptly countermarched and returned as quickly as possible,

and soon after was ordered to go to the support of Hancock: from which it is evident that this division was not made use of in the slightest degree, except that Keim's brigade, under General Couch's orders, was placed as a support on the left of Peck's brigade of the latter's division late in the afternoon. Couch's division, coming up from its bivouac of the night of the 4th, met Casey's division halted in the road about 11 A. M. About twelve o'clock orders were received for his leading brigade (Peck's) to move to the support of Hooker. In a drenching rain Peck moved over the bad roads with all possible speed and was able to become engaged at about two o'clock, and it was the influence of his prompt attack that somewhat released the pressure on Hooker's right at that time. Before night Couch sent him as a support General Devens with two regiments, and shortly afterward General Palmer with two, and General Keim with three, all of which he utilized in preparation for a possible attack by the enemy during the night.

Kearny's division, the most distant of all from the scene of Hooker's engagement, was necessarily late in reaching its destination, and when within a mile of the battlefield its commander was ordered by General Heintzelman to detach one regiment from Berry's brigade and two from Birney's to support General Emory, who was then on the extreme left at Allen's farm endeavoring to reach the enemy's right flank by way of the King Mill road. This depletion of Kearny's two leading brigades at a critical time could only be justified by a decided success of Emory. But the latter officer accomplished nothing, owing, it is said, to his ignorance of the country, the absence of guides, and the lateness of the hour at which his infantry re-enforcements had been sent to him. Jameson's brigade brought up the rear of Kearny's division and did not reach the battlefield until four o'clock; it was then utilized to form a supporting second line in two columns of regiments.

Owing to the unfavorable character of the ground

for the employment of cavalry and artillery neither of these arms were of much use to the Union forces during this battle; Emory, as just stated, being held to the left and rear of Hooker's position, while Stoneman was, by Sumner's direction, held in reserve on the Yorktown road.

With regard to the corps commanders, it may be said that Sumner, who had none of his own corps on the field, was, by virtue of his rank and the orders of McClellan, in command of the Union forces up to near five o'clock, when McClellan himself reached the field. His management throughout displayed indecision and an absence of every principle of generalship. Immediately after the battle McClellan ordered him back to Yorktown to take command of his own corps, which was due, in Sumner's opinion, "to misrepresentations that were made to General McClellan." General Heintzelman remained at Sumner's headquarters until about eleven o'clock, when, by direction of Sumner, he went to the left where Hooker was fighting, but he was so long on the journey that he did not reach his destination until about half past one o'clock, much too late to influence the conduct of affairs in that quarter. He did, however, perceive the great importance of the movement by the left flank, and it is possible that he might have utilized it had he been earlier on the ground. Keyes was in his proper position, but the immediate presence of Sumner prevented him from exercising that direct control of his three divisions that he would otherwise have had. Perceiving during the night of the 4th that a battle was imminent on the next day, he sent orders to Casey and Couch to start early from their bivouacs so as to reach the front, where he expected them by nine o'clock, but owing to contradictory orders to Casey from Sumner, Casey's division was halted until one o'clock, and this blocked the troops that were in his rear, and closed almost effectually the only avenue to the front for the better part of the day. Again this same division, after starting to support Hooker in the afternoon, was

ordered to return to execute a previous order of Keyes. Couch and Casey were not employed to the best advantage. Smith's, Keyes's other division, was directly controlled by Sumner, and though the order was twice given to send supports from it to Hancock, Sumner countermanded the order.

General McClellan reached Sumner's headquarters about five o'clock in the afternoon, and the news of his presence on the field revivified the drooping spirits of men and officers. During the progress of the battle he had remained at Yorktown engaged in making preparations for the embarkation of Franklin's division on its transports, for its speedy movement up the York River, and to make the necessary arrangements for the co-operation of the navy. He had had no expectation that his pursuing columns under Sumner would meet with excessive resistance, or other than that which would usually accompany that of a rear guard in retreat. He had sent two officers of his staff with Sumner to report to him from time to time as to the progress of affairs, and he says that it was not until about one o'clock that he learned that matters at the front were not progressing favorably. When he did so learn he left Yorktown by boat for his camp to reach his horses, and then hastened with all possible speed to the front. When he arrived there he could not learn much about the condition of affairs on the left, for even at that time there was no ready communication between the two wings of the Union army. With quick perception, however, he saw that Hancock should be promptly re-enforced in view of the next day's possibilities, and he issued orders for Smith's division and Naglee's brigade of Casey's division to proceed thither with all celerity. During the night he learned of Hooker's and Kearny's losses, and that the former's division could not be relied upon for serious work the next day. The congested condition of the roads over which he had traveled convinced him that it would not be possible to gain much from Sedgwick's and Richardson's advance overland from Yorktown,

which, as a measure of precaution, he had previously ordered, and he therefore directed them to return to Yorktown preparatory to embarkation to follow Franklin.

With regard to Franklin's division, which at McClellan's urgent and repeated solicitation had been sent him, and from which so much had been promised and expected, it was the victim of many untoward circumstances that neutralized its expected efficiency. It reached McClellan on the 22d of April, but as it was then considered too small to be detached to the Severn, it was decided to disembark it on the north bank of the York River to operate on Gloucester; but nearly two weeks were consumed in preliminary preparations for this project, when, on the 3d of May, he concluded to disembark it at Cheeseman's, on the Poquosin, for the contemplated assault on the Yorktown defenses after the bombardment had taken place. The next morning, however, the evacuation had taken place, and Franklin received orders at ten o'clock to re-embark his division, it being then in camp on the Poquosin River. It was not until noon of the 5th that Franklin succeeded in re-embarking his artillery and putting his transports in motion, so that he did not reach Yorktown until dusk of that day. It was then too late to start that night up the York, and he did not get off until the morning of the 6th. He reached Eltham that afternoon, and completed his disembarkation on the morning of the 7th. The divisions of Sedgwick, Porter, and Richardson subsequently followed Franklin to the vicinity of West Point by water, while the remaining divisions, the trains, and reserve artillery moved by land.

The concrete result of these two days' operations may thus be summed up: The Confederates had evacuated the Yorktown lines with the loss of some heavy artillery and worthless impedimenta, had with a greatly inferior force held in check five divisions of the Union army for an entire day, inflicting upon them greater loss than they themselves had sustained, and had succeeded

in getting their stalled trains off in safety to continue their retreat unmolested. The honors of war were clearly theirs. Excuses and explanations, however abundant and conclusive, can not affect the fact of their superior generalship.

Early on the morning of the 6th it was found that the Confederates had abandoned the Williamsburg lines and continued their retreat. Magruder's division had reached Diascund Bridge the preceding night, and G. W. Smith's next following was at Barhamsville. The twenty-four hours' delay gained by the battle had enabled the trains, though hampered by the horrible roads, to make good their escape, and they were covered by Hill's and Longstreet's divisions protecting their rear. These two divisions reached Burnt Ordinary, twelve miles from Williamsburg, the evening of the 6th, and the next day were concentrated at Barhamsville to be in readiness for Franklin in case he should attempt to attack from Eltham's Landing, while the Confederate trains were in motion on the road in the near vicinity. But this had already been provided for by General G. W. Smith, who had sufficient notice of the arrival of the transports, and had correctly estimated the strength of Franklin's division. Hoping that Franklin would advance beyond the protection of his gunboats, Whiting's division was placed in a favorable position to cover his debouch from Eltham's, but there being no evidence of Franklin's immediate advance, at seven o'clock Whiting was ordered to attack. The Confederate force, consisting of three brigades—Hood's in the center, Hampton's on the right, and S. R. Anderson's on the left—became engaged by nine o'clock, and after driving the Union pickets out of the woods that surrounded the landing, fell upon Newton's brigade that held the right of the Union line and guarded the main line of approach. On Newton's left were Slocum's and Dana's brigades, the latter, belonging to Sedgwick's division, having just that morning landed. The battle, beginning at nine o'clock, continued until about three o'clock in the afternoon, when the Confed-

erate attack ceased, and the Union line was again re-established in its position of the morning. In the meantime the Confederate trains had moved unmolested past the dangerous position, and the flanking had failed of its purpose. The Union loss was reported as one hundred and eighty-six, mainly in Newton's brigade, while the Confederates reported a loss of only fifty-two.

The Confederates having retreated by daybreak of the 6th, Williamsburg was occupied by the Union forces, but the condition of the latter was such that no immediate pursuit was possible. The bad management of the two preceding days had brought about the greatest confusion, and the inefficient staff service had not been able to extricate the trains nor clear the roads. Notwithstanding the corps organization of the army, headquarter orders recognized the division as the unit of maneuver, and as a consequence corps commanders found themselves separated from their proper commands, their usefulness restricted, and their responsibilities lessened. The troops were somewhat disheartened by a consciousness of poor leadership and wretched administration. Many of them were without blankets and knapsacks, and nearly all without food. A continuous rain of thirty-six hours' duration had converted the roads into almost impassable quicksands and beds of liquid mud, so that there was no immediate prospect of any relief. Under these circumstances it was of the first importance to bring up supplies, and to this end McClellan turned his immediate attention.

The advanced guard under Stoneman moved out on the morning of the 7th, and the next day reached Hockaday Springs, six and a half miles from Eltham, where it came in communication with Franklin's pickets. It was not until the afternoon of the 8th that Smith's division took up the march from Williamsburg, followed on the morning of the 9th by Couch, Casey, and Kearny, and the advance of the army began. Headquarters, with Sykes's division of regulars, encamped four miles from Williamsburg the night of

the 9th, and the next night joined the four advanced divisions at Roper's Church. Hooker's division was in rear, and those of Sedgwick, Porter, and Richardson had joined Franklin by water, so that the army was practically united, its various divisions being within supporting distance of each other.

Following the occupation of Williamsburg important results took place. Huger evacuated Norfolk, the Merrimac was sacrificed, and the James River opened to the Union navy. It was an important epoch in McClellan's career. He now had a choice of base either upon the James or upon the York and Pamunkey. Upon the soundness of his judgment and the boldness of his action future success depended. It is at such epochs that the governing characteristics of men assert themselves and proclaim their greatness or their mediocrity.

McClellan's analysis of the existing conditions after the Confederate retreat from Williamsburg exhibits clearly the question that it was necessary for him to decide at that time. He says: "Two courses were to be considered: First, to abandon the line of the York, cross the Chickahominy in the lower part of its course, gain the James, and adopt that as the line of supply; second, to use the railroad from West Point to Richmond as the line of supply, which would oblige us to cross the Chickahominy somewhere north of White Oak Swamp. The army was perfectly placed to adopt either course.

"Masking the movement by the advanced guard, the army could easily have crossed the Chickahominy by Jones's Bridge, and Cole's Ferry and Barret's Ferry by pontoon bridges, while the advanced guard, and probably one or two corps, could have followed the movement by Long Bridge and under cover of the White Oak Swamp, and the army would have been concentrated at Malvern Hill, ready either to advance upon Richmond by the roads near the left bank of the James, or to cross that river and place itself between Richmond and Petersburg.

"With all the aid of the gunboats and water transportation I am sure that I could have occupied Petersburg and placed the army in position between that place and Richmond, so that the enemy would have been obliged to abandon his capital or to come out to attack in a position of my own choosing, where, with the whole army concentrated, success would not have been doubtful and Richmond would have been the prize of victory.

"Moreover, the water line of transportation would have insured the prompt and safe arrival of the First Corps, or such other re-enforcements as might have been sent to me. It is needless to state that the army was well placed to follow the second line of operation indicated." *

McClellan's headquarters were established at Roper's Church, nineteen miles from Williamsburg, on the evening of May 10th, and remained there until the morning of the 13th. He had received information from Stanton on the 11th of the destruction of the Merrimac, and consequently knew that this would open the line of the James. It is therefore more than probable that when he arrived at his decision any doubt that he may have had as to the availability of this line was eliminated. There is every reason to suppose that the governing cause that impelled him to adopt the line of the Pamunkey was timidity arising from an exaggerated estimate of the Confederate strength that could then be concentrated against him in front of Richmond. In addition to this, the nearness of White House as a base of supplies and the certainty of its speedy occupation was a circumstance that had a preponderating influence at the time. His dispatch to Stanton on the 10th furnishes the strongest evidence with respect to the first point. In it he says: "From the information reaching me from every source I regard it as certain that the enemy will meet us with all his force on or near the Chickahominy. They can

* McClellan's Own Story, p. 343.

concentrate many more men than I have, and are collecting troops from all quarters, especially well-disciplined troops from the South. Casualties, sickness, garrisons, and guards have much reduced our numbers, and will continue to do so. I shall fight the rebel army with whatever force I may have, but duty requires me to urge that every effort be made to reenforce me without delay with all the disposable troops in Eastern Virginia, and that we concentrate all our forces as far as possible to fight the great battle now impending and to make it decisive. . . . I beg that the President and Secretary will maturely weigh what I say, and leave nothing undone to comply with my request. If I am not re-enforced, it is probable that I will be obliged to fight nearly double my numbers, strongly intrenched. I do not think it will be at all possible for me to bring more than seventy thousand men upon the field of battle."

By the 12th McClellan had definitely decided upon the line of the Pamunkey, and orders were issued on that day for the troops to take up their march for Cumberland and New Kent Court House, and on the 14th orders were issued for the concentration of the various divisions of the army at White House, Cumberland, and New Kent. By the 15th, headquarters, and the divisions of Franklin, Porter, Sykes, and Smith, were at Cumberland; Couch and Casey were near New Kent; Hooker and Kearny near Roper's; and Richardson and Sedgwick in the vicinity of Eltham and Cumberland. The next day Franklin, Smith, and Porter were established with the headquarters of the army at White House, where a permanent depot was established.

From Cumberland, on the 14th, McClellan sent another dispatch to the President of the same tenor as his previous one of the 10th to the Secretary, to which the President replied by telegram on the 15th, and through the Secretary by letter on the 18th. The telegram indicates his disappointment in these words: "Your long dispatch of yesterday is just received. I

will answer more fully soon. Will now say that all your dispatches to the Secretary of War have been promptly shown to me. Have done and shall do all I can to sustain you. Hoped that the opening of James River and putting Wool and Burnside in communication, with an open road to Richmond, or to you, had effected something in that direction. I am still unwilling to take all our force off the direct line between Richmond and here."

The written answer was as follows: *

WASHINGTON, *May* 18, 2 P. M.

GENERAL: Your dispatch to the President asking re-enforcements has been received and carefully considered.

The President is not willing to uncover the capital entirely, and it is believed that, even if this were prudent, it would require more time to effect a junction between your army and that of the Rappahannock by way of the Potomac and York Rivers than by a land march. In order, therefore, to increase the strength of the attack upon Richmond at the earliest moment, General McDowell has been ordered to march upon that city by the shortest route. He is ordered—keeping himself always in position to save the capital from all possible attack—so to operate as to put his left wing in communication with your right wing, and you are instructed to co-operate, so as to establish this communication as soon as possible, by extending your right wing to the north of Richmond. It is believed that this communication can be safely established either north or south of the Pamunkey River. In any event, you will be able to prevent the main body of the enemy's forces from leaving Richmond and falling in overwhelming force upon General McDowell. He will move with between thirty-five thousand and forty thousand men.

A copy of the instructions to General McDowell are with this. The specific task assigned to his command has been to provide against any danger to the capital of the nation.

At your earnest call for re-enforcements he is sent forward to co-operate in the reduction of Richmond, but charged, in attempting this, not to uncover the city of Washington; and you will give no order, either before or after your junction, which can put him out of position to cover this city. You and he will communicate with each other by telegraph or otherwise as frequently as may be necessary for

* McClellan's Own Story, p. 345.

sufficient co-operation. When General McDowell is in position on your right his supplies must be drawn from West Point, and you will instruct your staff officers to be prepared to supply him by that route.

The President desires that General McDowell retain the command of the Department of the Rappahannock and of the forces with which he moves.

By order of the President,

EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War.*

General McClellan has maintained that this order rendered it impossible for him to use the James River as a line of operations, forced him to establish his depots on the Pamunkey, and to approach Richmond from the north. But, as has already been noted, this decision had been reached by him before the reception of this order. In a dispatch to Stanton, dated May 10th, while he was at Roper's Church, he said: "I have fully established my connection with the troops near West Point, and the dangerous movement has passed. The West Point Railway is not very much injured. Materials for repairs, such as rails, etc., cars, and engines, may now be sent me. Should Norfolk be taken and the Merrimac destroyed, I can change my line to the James River and dispense with the railroad." The only conclusion that it is possible to draw, taking into consideration the tenor of all his dispatches and the letters that have been made public, may be thus summarized. He felt satisfied that his conduct of affairs had been on the whole gratifying. With a force greatly inferior to that of the enemy, according to his own estimate, he had forced the evacuation of Yorktown, had won a brilliant victory at Williamsburg, and was about to concentrate all the divisions of his army at New Kent, where, after a thorough examination of the country, he would be able to act understandingly. He nowhere exhibits his intention to attack the enemy, but confidently relies upon his ability to resist any attack that the latter may make upon him, and the expectation that the scene of this great battle will be near the Chickahominy is frequently stated. To enable him to reap the most decisive re-

sults he incessantly implores the Administration to send him re-enforcements, to bring his fighting force up to that which he estimates the enemy has, and to satisfy him he is promised the co-operation of McDowell at the earliest moment. But this promise is coupled with the restriction that the latter shall not uncover Washington while making the junction.

From this time until the Army of the Potomac was established on the banks of the Chickahominy the movements were painfully slow. The roads, it is true, were exceedingly bad and the weather unprecedentedly wretched; a depot had to be established and supplies had to be collected; the country was unknown and its topography had to be investigated. Granting all these time-devouring causes, there was nevertheless a lack of enterprise and aggressiveness that should not have characterized a pursuing army on the heels of one disheartened by its supposed defeat at Williamsburg.

A few days after the battle of Williamsburg General McClellan expressed his dissatisfaction to the Secretary of War with the corps organization of the Army of the Potomac, stating that as it came near bringing on a disastrous defeat there he was unwilling to be held responsible for the existing arrangement, and requested full and complete authority to relieve from duty commanders of corps or divisions who proved themselves incompetent. The Secretary, in reply, authorized him to temporarily suspend that organization in the army under his command and adopt any other that he might see fit, until further orders. But the President, in granting him this authority, thought it best to give him some words of caution. He says: "I wish to say a few words to you privately on this subject. I ordered the army corps organization not only on the unanimous opinion of the twelve generals whom you had selected and assigned as generals of divisions, but also on the unanimous opinion of every military man I could get an opinion from and every modern military book, yourself only excepted. Of course, on my own judgment, I do not pretend to

understand the subject. I now think it indispensable for you to know how your struggle against it is received in quarters which we can not entirely disregard. It is looked upon as merely an effort to pamper one or two pets and to persecute and degrade their supposed rivals. I have no word from Sumner, Heintzelman, or Keyes. The commanders of these corps are, of course, the three highest officers with you, but I am constantly told that you have no consultation or communication with them; that you consult and communicate with nobody but General Fitz-John Porter and perhaps General Franklin. I do not say these complaints are true or just, but at all events it is proper you should know of their existence. Do the commanders of corps disobey your orders in anything?

"When you relieved General Hamilton of his command the other day you thereby lost the confidence of at least one of your best friends in the Senate. And here let me say, not as applicable to you personally, that senators and representatives speak of me in their places as they please without question, and that officers of the army must cease addressing insulting letters to them for taking no greater liberty with them.

"But to return: Are you strong enough—are you strong enough, even with my help—to set your foot upon the necks of Sumner, Heintzelman, and Keyes all at once? This is a practical and very serious question for you. The success of your army and the cause of the country are the same, and of course I only desire the good of the cause."

Certainly up to this time McClellan had not sought advice from his corps commanders, and had never called them together in councils of war. His failure to do so may have given rise to an impression throughout the army that he was antagonistic to them, strengthened perhaps by the knowledge that in the selection of the corps commanders his wishes and advice had not been consulted. All three had been present at Williamsburg, and there affairs had been woefully mismanaged. On the other hand, it was also a matter of gen-

eral knowledge that he had a high admiration for General Porter especially, and for Generals Smith and Franklin as well. Their belief in McClellan's military ability and admiration for his personal character were strengthened by constant association, and resulted in the strongest mutual affection, which, when we consider the charming traits of McClellan's personality, is not surprising.

Under the authority granted him McClellan reorganized the army, forming the Fifth and Sixth Provisional Corps, under the command of Generals Porter and Franklin respectively, on the 18th of May, so that for the remainder of the campaign the five corps of the army were as follows:

Second, Sumner, Richardson's and Sedgwick's divisions; Third, Heintzelman, Hooker's and Kearny's divisions; Fourth, Keyes, Couch's and Casey's divisions; Fifth, Porter, Porter's (afterward Morell's) and Sykes's divisions and the reserve artillery; Sixth, Franklin, Franklin's (afterward Slocum's) and W. F. Smith's divisions.

CHAPTER XI.

JACKSON'S VALLEY CAMPAIGN. — HANOVER COURT HOUSE.—BATTLE OF SEVEN PINES.—FAIR OAKS.

VERY slowly did the Army of the Potomac move toward Richmond, for it was not until the 21st of May that its front was established along the Chickahominy. Its tardy progress was excused by the wretched roads, made worse than usual by the unprecedented inclement weather, and the necessity of cautious advance in the presence of a supposed superior force ready to offer battle at the first favorable opportunity. Meantime the Confederate army leisurely retreated without compulsory pressure, Smith's and Magruder's divisions taking the road through New Kent to Baltimore Cross Roads, nineteen miles from Barhamsville, while Longstreet's and Hill's divisions, following the road to Long Bridge, occupied the line of the York River Railroad near Bottom's Bridge. In this position they had direct communication with Richmond by the railroad, and here they remained for five days. But when, on the 14th, Johnston heard of the destruction of the Merrimac, he crossed his army the next day to cover Richmond against a possible advance from the south, and on the 17th his army was encamped on the main roads leading into Richmond from that direction, and covering at the same time the approaches by way of New Bridge and Mechanicsville to the east.

A brief reference to the sequence of events which intervened to prevent McDowell from joining forces with McClellan may not be out of place. It will be remembered that from the time when McClellan ceased to be general in chief, the duties of that office were ad-

ministered by the Secretary of War. Shortly afterward six separate departments were established which were commanded respectively by McClellan with the Army of the Potomac, Wool at Fort Monroe, Dix at Baltimore, Banks in the Shenandoah Valley, Frémont in the Mountain Department, and Wadsworth in the city of Washington. The arrangements which McClellan had made for Banks's forces to cover Washington on the line of the Manassas Gap Railroad were broken up in consequence of Jackson's first Valley campaign, resulting in the battle of Kernstown, March 23d, and this necessitated the retention for a time of Shields's and Williams's divisions under Banks in the Valley to drive Jackson from that region. McDowell's corps was detached from the Army of the Potomac to cover Washington, and was concentrated in the vicinity of Manassas with its advance for a time at Catlett's Station on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. The political pressure which had caused the President to detach Blenker's division from McClellan's command and assign it to the new department created for Frémont has already been mentioned.* Blenker's division was first directed to move by way of Harper's Ferry and report from there to Frémont, but McClellan obtained authority to order him to move with two of his brigades direct to Strasburg for temporary duty with Banks, the third brigade to follow when relieved by troops drawn from the railway brigade of Colonel Miles. Blenker left Warrenton, April 6th, and was practically lost until the War Department heard of him at Salem, and sent Rosecrans to conduct his division to Frémont. It did not reach Winchester until about April 19th, and then it was in a deplorable condition, needing tents, shoes, provisions, and forage, and its animals much jaded and nearly starved. It was not until May 8th that its three brigades were united at Romney, and three days afterward were turned over by Rosecrans to Frémont at Petersburg. For forty-two days it had been prac-

See page 228.

tically eliminated as a fighting force, and in the meanwhile suffered such privations and hardships as seriously to affect its discipline and efficiency.

Frémont, in a letter dated April 21st, outlined the plan of operations which he proposed to adopt. It was substantially to unite Blenker's division of nine thousand men with that of Schenck's three thousand at Moorefield or Franklin, and, acting in conjunction with Banks in the Valley of the Shenandoah, to move to Monterey, where he expected to be joined by Milroy's command of thirty-five hundred men, and then to strike the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad at or near Salem. Cox, operating in the Kanawha Valley with seven thousand men, was expected by him to take possession of Newbern, or, joining him, and thus increasing his strength to twenty-two thousand, certainly seize the railroad, and thus destroy the connection between Knoxville and the Confederate army in Eastern Virginia, turn Cumberland Gap, and seize Knoxville. This plan was approved by the War Department, but he was directed not to advance toward Knoxville after striking the railroad without further instructions, and advised that in the prosecution of his operations he was not to consider the positions or movements of General Banks as subject to his control or to be dependent upon his movements. Up to May 1st the War Department hoped that this movement of Frémont's might be speedily undertaken, but nothing came of it; the delay of Blenker's division, the difficulties caused by bad weather, deficient transportation, and other causes had scattered Frémont's command from Moorefield to Franklin at the time when Milroy was attacked by Jackson on May 8th at McDowell.

On the 26th of April Banks was informed by the War Department that the President did not desire him to prosecute his advance farther to the south, and he was requested to consider whether he was not already making too wide a separation between the body of troops under his immediate command and his supporting force, and as it was possible that events might

make it necessary to transfer Shields's division to the Department of the Rappahannock he was desired to act accordingly. On May 1st Banks was directed to fall back to Strasburg, and notified that Shields would within a day or two be detached to join McDowell; but Shields was informed the next day that he was not expected to move with his division until Banks had arrived at or was near Strasburg with the remainder of his forces. Delays ensued, and as late as May 9th Banks, being still at New Market, was reminded by Mr. Stanton of his orders of the 1st, and cautioned that he was out of position should events make it necessary to move to the support of McDowell. At that time the War Department did not know the whereabouts of Jackson with certainty, as the most contradictory intelligence had been received from Frémont and McDowell, and Banks had not supplied any certain information. The latter had, it is true, reported on the 2d that Jackson was moving toward Port Republic, his destination being either Waynesborough or Staunton, and, if the latter, with the design of attacking Milroy at McDowell, but no confirmation of this conjecture had afterward been sent. Finally Banks began his movement from New Market for Strasburg, May 12th, and Shields started for Catlett's Station, which he reached May 18th, and, after refitting there, arrived at his destination opposite Fredericksburg, May 22d.

General McDowell had reported his strength on May 16th as thirty thousand one hundred and twelve officers and men for duty, and the President had determined, in response to the call of General McClellan, to send him forward, after Shields had joined, to operate against Richmond in co-operation with McClellan, but at the same time to cover Washington. He accordingly notified McClellan, May 22d, that he would set out probably by the 24th and would meet the Confederate force of General Anderson, estimated from twelve thousand to fifteen thousand strong, on the first day's march, which he purposed to turn by its left flank, and inquired as to the extent of the co-operation he might

expect by an extension of McClellan's right flank in an endeavor to cut this force off from a retreat on Richmond. He stated that his force would be about thirty-eight thousand men, for which he would need subsistence, and would also require forage for eleven thousand animals.

The military situation of the Confederate forces in Northern Virginia about the middle of April and until Jackson began his strategical movements was not specially hopeful for their cause, and General Robert E. Lee, who had been placed in general charge of army operations under President Davis, could then see no certain means of success.

General Edward Johnson, with about twenty-eight hundred men, had been forced by Milroy east of the Shenandoah Mountains, and finally took his stand at West View, a few miles west of Staunton. Jackson had retreated from in front of Banks and had taken up a position in Elk Run Valley at the foot of Swift Run Gap, April 17th, where he was within supporting distance of Ewell, and in a position to take advantage of any mistake that might be made by Banks. Ewell, with about eighty-five hundred effectives, was in the vicinity of Gordonsville, under general orders to obey Jackson. McDowell having occupied Falmouth with his advanced guard April 19th, Field, to observe McDowell's movements, had fallen back about fourteen miles from Fredericksburg, not being strong enough to prevent the occupation of the town. In opposition to these Confederate forces there were Banks with twenty thousand in the Valley confronting Jackson; Frémont with about sixteen thousand scattered in the mountains west of the Shenandoah Valley from Moorefield to Franklin and McDowell; Geary with a brigade at White Plains guarding the line of the Manassas Gap Railroad; and McDowell with two divisions on the line of the Fredericksburg Railroad covering Washington, designing to occupy Fredericksburg; in all there were certainly seventy thousand Union troops available against not more than about twenty-

five thousand Confederates. But the latter had the advantage of being under a single military direction, while the Union troops were under commanders who were severally charged with diverse objects by the authorities at Washington.

After a good deal of correspondence and suggestion, Jackson asked, April 26th, for a re-enforcement of five thousand men to enable him to attack Banks with some prospect of success, saying, "Now, as it appears to me, is the golden opportunity for striking a blow." But as it did not appear possible to get this re-enforcement, he proposed three plans, April 29th: "Either to leave Ewell at Swift Run Gap to threaten Banks's rear in the event of his advancing on Staunton and move with my command rapidly on the force in front of General Edward Johnson; or else co-operate with Ewell, to attack the enemy's detached force between New Market and the Shenandoah, and, if successful in this, to press forward and get in Banks's rear at New Market and thus induce him to fall back; the third is, to pass down the Shenandoah, east of the Blue Ridge, and thus threaten Winchester *via* Front Royal. Of the three plans I give the preference to attacking the force west of Staunton, for, if successful, I would afterward only have Banks to contend with, and in doing this would be re-enforced by General Edward Johnson, and by that time you might be able to give me re-enforcements, which united with the troops under my control would enable me to defeat Banks. If he should be routed and his command destroyed, nearly all our forces here could, if necessary, cross the Blue Ridge to Warrenton, Fredericksburg, or any other threatened point."

For the purposes of this memoir it is only necessary to note the salient events connected with Jackson's successful strategy and their bearing upon the fortunes of the Army of the Potomac. Suffice it to say, then, that Jackson, on the afternoon of the 30th of April, prosecuting his first plan, moved his three brigades from their camps in Elk Run Valley on the road to

Port Republic, and directed Ewell to occupy his position in observation of Banks. The road was horrible and the difficulties correspondingly great, so that he succeeded in making only about twelve miles from his camp by the night of May 2d. Instead of passing through Port Republic, he diverged to the left, crossed the Blue Ridge at Brown's Gap, following the road to Meacham's Station on the Virginia Central Railroad, thus diverting suspicion of his object. Here transportation awaited his infantry, and without delay he hastened toward Staunton, where his command was united on the 5th of May and his junction with Johnson effected. His movements had been well screened by Ashby's cavalry, and his purpose was so far unsuspected. Giving his troops one day's rest, he marched west on May 7th, fought the battle of Sitlington Hill on the 8th, and by its successful issue and his superior numbers forced Milroy and Schenck to retreat toward Franklin. Jackson kept up the pursuit as far as Franklin, but was unable to inflict any further damage upon the Union forces. He had, however, by this operation succeeded in throwing back Frémont's column and in eliminating all possibility of its co-operation with Banks while the latter was in the upper Valley. To prevent Frémont having access to the Valley by the lateral by-paths he had these obstructed by felled trees and other temporary obstacles. He began his return on the 12th, and by rapid marching was in communication with Ewell on the 17th. Banks in the meantime had retired to Strasburg, and Shields's division had started eastward to join McDowell. The elimination of Frémont from the combination that a few days before was so formidable, and the depletion of Banks's force by Shields's division, gave Jackson an unexpected advantage that he was not slow to improve. Uniting with Ewell at New Market and keeping Ashby in front of Banks on the Valley Turnpike, he moved his command across the Massanutten Mountains into the Luray Valley, and on the 22d bivouacked his advance under Ewell ten miles from Front Royal, Banks

being in complete ignorance of his movements. The next day Colonel Kenly's command, of about a thousand men at Front Royal, were surprised and overwhelmed after making as gallant a resistance as was possible under the circumstances, and the Confederates gained possession of the road to Newtown on Banks's line of retreat to Winchester. The latter succeeded, however, in effecting his retreat to Winchester and holding Jackson in check in the battle of the 25th until he could secure the safety of the major portion of his trains while continuing his retreat to Martinsburg and thence across the Potomac to Williamsport. The mere tactical advantages of Jackson's operations were relatively unimportant as compared with the strategical. He had, it is true, won a victory over Milroy at Sitlington Hill, but had suffered greater loss than the latter, and then turning upon Banks had been able to drive him out of the Valley and across the Potomac, barely missing the entire capture of Banks's six thousand men with his own twenty thousand, but he was not in sufficient strength to essay any further advance. The authorities at Washington, however, finding some comfort in the escape of Banks's force, immediately entertained the design of attempting the capture of Jackson, who until May 30th remained in the vicinity of Harper's Ferry and Martinsburg threatening the capture of the former place.

This project was in effect to direct Frémont to move in from the west directly upon Harrisonburg, while McDowell should detach twenty thousand of his forces to Strasburg, and Banks and Saxton from Williamsport and Harper's Ferry should occupy Jackson's attention in front. And it was in the prosecution of this plan that McDowell's corps was diverted from its intended movement overland to make junction with McClellan, and half its strength was started toward the Valley in the hope of intercepting Jackson.

Mr. Lincoln had but just returned to Washington from a visit to McDowell at Fredericksburg when he heard of the disaster at Front Royal, and on the 24th

of May, before he was aware of its consequences to Banks, he notified McClellan that McDowell's movement would certainly begin on Monday morning, the 26th, as Shields's division was much too worn to start earlier. He also suggests: "If, in conjunction with McDowell's movement against Anderson, you could send a force from your right to cut off the enemy's supplies from Richmond, preserve the railroad bridges across the two forks of the Pamunkey, and intercept the enemy's retreat, you will prevent the army now opposed to you from receiving an accession of numbers of nearly fifteen thousand men, and if you succeed in saving the bridges you will secure a line of railroad for supplies in addition to the one you now have. Can you not do this almost as well as not, while you are building the Chickahominy bridges? McDowell and Shields both say they can, and positively will, move Monday morning. I wish you to march cautiously and safely." But later in the afternoon, when the condition of affairs in the Valley was better understood, Mr. Lincoln telegraphs him: "In consequence of General Banks's critical position I have been compelled to suspend General McDowell's movements to join you. The enemy are making a desperate push upon Harper's Ferry, and we are trying to throw General Frémont's force and part of General McDowell's in their rear."

McClellan at once perceived that there was no longer any hope of the participation of McDowell's army in the immediate operations in front of Richmond, and he replied to the President that he would make his calculations accordingly. From this instant, the evening of the 24th of May, the Administration had the right to expect some aggressive action against the enemy in McClellan's immediate front to counteract the exhilarating influence of Jackson's successes, as well as to relieve the tension of the public mind, and there is every reason to believe that McClellan himself was fully impressed with the necessity of some such action. He was unfortunately in poor physical condition at this

time, which, reacting upon his mental tone, gave a somewhat morbid tinge to his thoughts, diminishing his confidence and accentuating his apprehension of disaster. Mr. Lincoln was himself very greatly harassed and depressed at the state of affairs at this time, as shown in his dispatches advising McClellan of the progress of events in the Valley, where, after detailing the efforts of the Administration to relieve the situation at Harper's Ferry by "sending such regiments and dribs from here and Baltimore as we can spare," he says: "If McDowell's force was now beyond our reach we should be entirely helpless. Apprehensions of something like this, and no unwillingness to sustain you, has always been my reason for withholding McDowell's forces from you." And later: "The enemy is moving north in sufficient force to drive General Banks before him, precisely in what force we can not tell. He is also threatening Leesburg, and Geary on the Manassas Gap Railroad, from both north and south, in precisely what force we can not tell. I think the movement is a general and concerted one, such as would not be if he was acting upon the purpose of a very desperate defense of Richmond. I think the time is near when you must either attack Richmond or give up the job and come to the defense of Washington. Let me hear from you instantly."

In his reply McClellan expressed the opinion that Jackson's movement was for the purpose of preventing re-enforcements being sent to the Army of the Potomac, that the mass of the rebel troops was still in the vicinity of Richmond, and that the time was very near when he should attack Richmond, as two corps were already across the Chickahominy and the others would be ready to cross when the bridges were completed. The next day's reports indicated a more cheerful tone at Washington, and conveyed the information from McDowell that the Confederate General Anderson's force was leaving the vicinity of Fredericksburg, coupled with a rumor that their destination was either to join Jackson or the forces at Richmond. This im-

pelled the President to inquire of McClellan, "Can you not cut the Aquia Creek Railroad?" To which the latter replied: "Have arranged to carry out your last order. We are quietly closing in upon the enemy preparatory to the last struggle. Situated as I am I feel forced to take every possible precaution against disaster, and to secure my flanks against the probably superior force in front of me. My arrangements for to-morrow are very important, and, if successful, will leave me free to strike on the return of the force detached."

These arrangements had reference to an expedition under General Fitz-John Porter for the distinct purpose of clearing the enemy from the upper Peninsula as far as Hanover Court House, or beyond, and to destroy the railroad and other bridges over the South Anna and Pamunkey Rivers. This Confederate force consisted of the command of General Branch, which had been ordered from Gordonsville on the 20th of May and directed to take position at Hanover Court House for the purpose of covering the two railroads from Richmond, and to keep up the connection with General J. R. Anderson's command then in front of Fredericksburg. The possible concentration of these two considerable bodies of the enemy upon his right flank gave McClellan some uneasiness in regard to the security of this flank, and he determined to strike them before entering upon any general movement of the army. It was now no longer the purpose to preserve the connection by rail between Fredericksburg and McClellan's right, but, *on the contrary*, to destroy as effectively as possible the railway communications from Richmond to the Confederate forces in Northern Virginia. At this time McClellan had no hope of McDowell's advance, and the supposition that this expedition was organized for the purpose of stretching out a helping hand to McDowell has no foundation in fact; its especial purpose being for the protection of his own right flank, lest any considerable body of the enemy by turning that flank should threaten his communications.

Porter's command, consisting of an advanced guard under General Emory, comprising the Fifth and Sixth United States Cavalry and Benson's horse battery, General Morell's division of Martindale's, Butterfield's, and McQuade's brigades, Berdan's sharpshooters, and three light batteries under Captain Griffin, started at daybreak early on the 27th from their camps at New Bridge, taking the direct road through Mechanicsville to Hanover Court House. In addition to this force, Colonel G. K. Warren's provisional brigade, consisting of the Fifth and Thirteenth New York Infantry, the First Connecticut Heavy Artillery acting as infantry, and Weeden's Rhode Island battery, moved on a road parallel to the Pamunkey from Old Church to the same destination, the combined force having the respectable strength of about twelve thousand men. Rain began in the night and continued during the greater part of the morning, making the roads bad and the marching difficult; but early in the afternoon a portion of the enemy, consisting of the Twenty-eighth North Carolina and a section of artillery, commanded by Colonel Lane, was found in position across the road about two miles in front of Hanover Court House. This force, after inflicting some damage upon the Twenty-fifth New York, which had previously been sent forward to support the cavalry advanced guard, was driven off, after an hour's conflict, by Butterfield's brigade assisted by Benson's battery. Under the mistaken notion that the whole of Branch's brigade was in front, the pursuit was taken up by the main body of Porter's command, leaving Martindale's brigade at the junction of the Ashland road with instructions to move west to the railroad and follow it up to Hanover Court House. Instead, however, of such being the case, Branch had moved his camp the night before and was on the left of Martindale near the railroad. It thus happened that Martindale was soon in conflict with a much superior force, while the bulk of the Union forces was continually separating itself from him. With the Second Maine,

the Forty-fourth New York, the depleted Twenty-fifth New York, and a section of Martin's battery, Martindale was driven back to the main road and obliged to maintain an unequal contest for several hours until the main body of the Union forces could be countermarched from the vicinity of the Court House to bring him the requisite succor. This was done before the threatened destruction of his small command was accomplished, and by nightfall the enemy retired, suffering some loss in prisoners but without serious demoralization. Considering the disparity of numbers, the advantage was upon the Confederate side, principally because of the misconception as to the exact situation of Branch's main body.

McClellan attached greater importance to the results of this operation than it in reality deserves, and seemed aggrieved that neither the Secretary nor the President did "at all appreciate the value and magnitude of Porter's victory." That he himself was much impressed with it is evidenced in the dispatch of that night to the Secretary, saying: "Porter has gained two complete victories over superior forces, yet I feel obliged to move there in the morning with re-enforcements, to secure the complete destruction of the rebels in that quarter. In doing so I run some risk here, but I can not help it. The enemy are even in greater force than I had supposed. I will do all that quick movement can accomplish, but you must send me all the troops you can, and leave to me full latitude as to choice of commanders. It is absolutely necessary to destroy the rebels near Hanover Court House before I can advance." Under this feeling of the importance of General Porter's mission, Sykes's regulars were sent forward as a support, and McClellan himself rode forward to the scene of the engagement, got wet, and thus brought on a return of his old Mexican fever, which laid him up in great physical suffering at a time that proved afterward to be most unpropitious. The damage inflicted upon the railroad communications of the enemy was but temporary and was soon

repaired, so that upon the whole it would have been much better had McClellan ignored Branch's command and devoted his attention to a general movement of the whole army, for there was no further serious engagement on the extreme right flank, and the Union troops were recalled on the 29th to their former camps.

However, before McDowell's recall was known to the Confederates, General Johnston was exceedingly apprehensive lest his junction with McClellan should take place, and he had resolved upon an attack of McClellan's right flank at Mechanicsville, hoping, if successful, to prevent it. This project was certainly attended with great risk, for had he failed, Richmond would have been in jeopardy. Having learned from Anderson on the 27th that McDowell's advance had reached six miles from Fredericksburg, he immediately issued orders for the concentration of his troops to carry out his purpose of attack at Mechanicsville. A. P. Hill's division, comprising the commands of Anderson and Branch, was brought down from the vicinity of Ashland and placed on the east side of the Chickahominy near Mechanicsville, under orders to attack at early dawn on the 29th; Whiting's division, strengthened by the addition of Hatton's and Pettigrew's brigades and D. R. Jones's division, were concentrated near the Meadow and Mechanicsville Bridges, with orders to cross at the instant that Hill attacked, the whole to constitute a right wing under the command of General G. W. Smith, who was, if possible, to overwhelm McClellan's right flank, while the remainder of Johnston's force should operate to the best advantage as circumstances might determine. But just as the troops on the south side of the Chickahominy were moving into position on the 28th, word came from General Stuart, the alert Confederate cavalryman, that McDowell's advance had been stopped, and that it was believed that he was moving north from Fredericksburg. Johnston immediately abandoned his contemplated attack, withdrew A. P. Hill by the bridge on the

road from Richmond to Ashland without his presence having been suspected by the Union forces, and placed him on the left of the Confederate army, within easy supporting distance of the troops guarding the upper Chickahominy bridges. He then returned to his preconceived plan of attacking the two corps of Keyes and Heintzelman, which had in the meantime crossed the Chickahominy at Bottom's Bridge and were isolated from the right wing of the Union army. To understand the situation a brief reference to the surroundings of Richmond will probably suffice.

Notwithstanding the admirable natural defensive advantages that Richmond possessed, the absence of any strong artificial defenses in the spring of 1862 necessitated the presence of a strong and skillfully handled army to make its tenure reasonably secure, and such was then the character of the Confederate army under General Johnston. The Chickahominy River, with its low marshy bed and prominent bluffs, formed a great natural ditch fronting southeast, and constituted an almost impassable barrier in this direction. Its bottom lands on either side, in times of freshet, were completely overflowed, and then, except where embanked causeways, as at New Bridge, led from the rising ground to pile or trestle bridges across the main channel, it was at such times elsewhere impassable. These bottom lands varied from a mile to a mile and a half in width, and especially on the right bank were fringed with high bluffs rising above the tree tops of the valley. The prominent crossings of the Chickahominy within the theater of operations were at the Meadow, Mechanicsville, New, Bottom's, and Long Bridges, from which points the roads leading into Richmond traversed the intervening country through a thickly wooded territory that afforded greater advantages to the defense than to an attacking army. The general direction of the roads coming from the southeast was nearly parallel to the Chickahominy, and it was upon the most easterly, the Williamsburg road, that the two corps of the Army of the

Potomac were located when General Johnston determined to attack.

It seems to have been McClellan's intention, after Casey's division had made a lodgment on the right bank of the Chickahominy, which he did on the 20th, to push over the remaining division of the Fourth Corps, to be followed by the Third Corps, so as to have a sufficient force on the right bank to hold it while he forced a passage for his right wing at New Bridge. The position at the latter point had been carefully reconnoitered, and the engineers of the army had collected sufficient bridge material to reconstruct New Bridge as well as two trestle bridges a half mile above and below this point. It is asserted that these bridges could have been thrown and the army crossed by the 28th had the order been given. But just at this time McClellan's attention was directed to the affair at Hanover Court House and the order was not issued. In the meantime Sumner's corps, located near Tyler's House, began the construction of two bridges, afterward known as Sumner's upper and lower bridges, which were practically completed by the 30th, and he was thus brought into communication with Casey's pickets at Dr. Trent's on the opposite bank. These bridges, though not at first contemplated in the general engineering operations, had a very great importance afterward upon the battle of Fair Oaks, especially the upper or Grapevine Bridge.

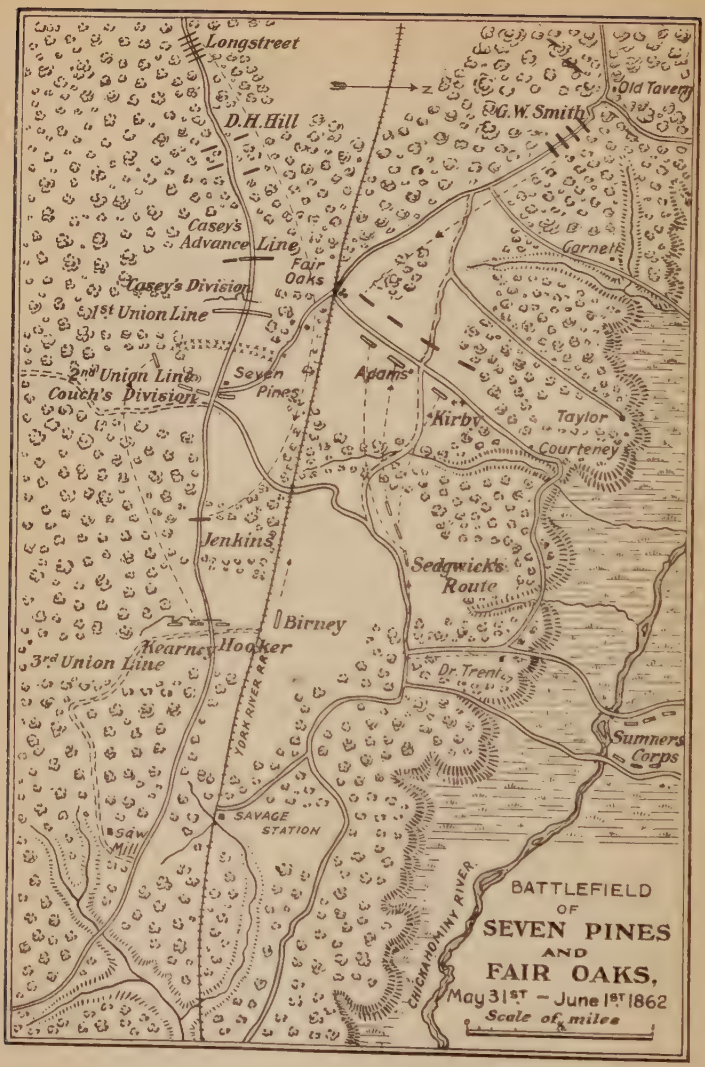
After the crossing of the Third and Fourth Corps had been effected General Heintzelman was placed in command, and he was instructed to hold the crossings at White Oak Swamp and Bottom's Bridge, push Casey's division forward on the Williamsburg road about five eighths of a mile beyond Seven Pines, where he was to construct a redoubt and line of rifle pits to be located by the engineers of General McClellan's staff, and move up Couch's division to Seven Pines in support. The two divisions of the Third Corps were placed, one (Kearny's) at the *tête-de-pont* at Bottom's Bridge, and the other (Hooker's) at White Oak

Swamp; the remaining three corps of the army were on the north bank, stretching from Mechanicsville to Grapevine Bridge, the latter point being somewhat more than four miles by the road from Bottom's Bridge and about three and a quarter miles from the railroad bridge, which was then about completed.

The isolation of that portion of the Army of the Potomac on the right bank of the Chickahominy and the wide separation of its component parts afforded General Johnston the tempting opportunity for which he had been waiting. General Keyes, the commander of the Fourth Corps, clearly perceived the danger of his extremely isolated position, and although he strongly protested against it he endeavored by increased vigilance to lessen the hazard. Casey's division, though occupying the most important and vulnerable position of the whole army, was, in fact, composed of the most unreliable troops. He himself says: "On leaving Washington, eight of the regiments were composed of raw troops. It has been the misfortune of the division in marching through the Peninsula to be subjected to an ordeal which would have severely tried veteran troops. Furnished with scanty transportation, occupying sickly positions, exposed to the inclemency of the weather, at times without tents or blankets, and illy supplied with rations and medical stores, the loss from sickness has been great, especially with the officers." This division, so lacking in health and preparation for the defense of the important position to which it had been assigned, he was obliged still further to weaken by the detail of large parties for guard, picket, and intrenching duty, so that when attacked by Hill's division on the 31st he could not bring into action more than forty-two hundred and fifty-three men in his entire command. Surely the responsibility of the disaster of that day should rest upon the shoulders of those in authority, who appeared to have been deaf to proper soldierly remonstrances and blind to the inevitable consequences of this violation of the simplest principles of the art of war.

While Casey was engaged in constructing the works of defense indicated by the engineers during the two days that elapsed before he was so vigorously attacked, and at the same time withstanding the efforts of Garland's brigade to reconnoiter his position, Johnston had decided in his own mind that the Union advance had come near enough to be struck a decisive blow. Garland had reported to him by noon of the 30th the position of the Union forces in his front, and Rodes, whose brigade was in observation on the Charles City road, had found no evidences of an advance in that direction. His original plan, which was considerably modified in execution through some misunderstanding of Longstreet, commanding the right wing of the Confederate army, involved the concentration of twenty-three of the twenty-seven brigades of his army upon the field of battle by the Charles City, Williamsburg, and Nine-mile roads, so as entirely to overwhelm Keyes's corps, drive it back upon Heintzelman's, and capture or destroy that portion of the Army of the Potomac then on the right bank of the Chickahominy. The movement was to begin early on the 31st, and a glance at the disposition of the component parts of his army on the evening of the 30th will exhibit the entire feasibility of his project.

Huger's division of three brigades was southeast of Richmond on the bank of Gillis's Creek; Rodes's brigade of Hill's division was three and a half miles out in observation on the Charles City road, the remaining three brigades of this division being about the same distance out on the Williamsburg road; of Longstreet's division of six brigades, three were some three miles out on the Nine-mile road, and the other three were posted near where this road leaves Richmond; these three divisions constituted the right wing of the Confederate army under the command of General Longstreet. The left wing, commanded by General G. W. Smith, comprised Whiting's division of five brigades, which had received orders about midnight of the 30th to take position early in the morning in sup-


Longstreet
D.H.Hill
Casey's Advance Line
Casey's Division
1st Union Line
2nd Union Line
Couch's Division
3rd Union Line
Fair Oaks
Seven Pines
Jenkins
Birney
Kearney
Hooker
York River R.R.
Savage Station
Saw Mill
Old Tavern
G.W. Smith
Garnett
Adams
Kirby
Taylor
Courteney
Sedgwick's Route
Dr. Trent
Sumners Corps
Chickahominy River
BATTLEFIELD OF SEVEN PINES AND FAIR OAKS,
May 31st – June 1st 1862
Scale of miles

port of Longstreet on the Nine-mile road; McLaws's division of three brigades, stationed on the Chickahominy Bluffs, overlooked the crossings between New and Mechanicsville Bridges; D. R. Jones's division of two brigades was on McLaws's left, and A. P. Hill's still farther to the left.

From the position of these several divisions on the 30th and the instructions that General Johnston transmitted to their commanders, he clearly intended that Huger should move at an early hour on the Charles City road, so as to relieve Rodes's brigade to enable it to join Hill on the Williamsburg road, and that Huger should then make his progress on the Charles City road conform to that of Hill, being ready to support his flank by attack, but at the same time he was cautioned to maintain a strong reserve to cover the right flank of the army; that Hill, after being joined by Rodes, should open the attack with his four brigades moving down the Williamsburg road upon the Union position, which had been accurately reconnoitered by Garland on the 30th; that Longstreet, moving down the Nine-mile road, should support Hill's attack, the two divisions coming together at Seven Pines; that Whiting, provided his division reached its prescribed position in time, was to support Longstreet, and, if not, part of McLaws's and Jones's divisions were to be drawn from their positions for this purpose and their places to be occupied by Whiting coming up later. It is impossible to conceive how the two Union corps could have escaped entire destruction had this plan been carried out as devised. But, most fortunately for the Union army, Longstreet misunderstood his instructions and moved his division over to the Williamsburg road, and in so doing delayed Whiting, Hill, and Huger in turn. This delayed the arrival of Rodes also, so that it was not until about one o'clock that the signal was given for Hill's brigades to move to the attack.

The head of Whiting's division had reached the vicinity of General Johnston's headquarters about eight

o'clock on its way to the Nine-mile road, and was then stopped until the position of Longstreet's division was ascertained, since it was to follow the latter. Johnston doubted the accuracy of the information that was soon brought to him that Longstreet had moved over to the Williamsburg road, and dispatched his aid, Lieutenant J. B. Washington, to find Longstreet, and, if the information were true, to direct Longstreet to return the three brigades of his division to the Nine-mile road, provided this could be done without material loss of time. Under the impression that he was to be found on this road, Washington galloped rapidly down the Nine-mile road, passed the Confederate pickets, and was captured by Casey's pickets about ten o'clock near Fair Oaks, and it was the capture of this aid that convinced Keyes that Johnston was in person on the field and that an attack in force was imminent. He, however, believed that the movement was to be expected from the direction of Fair Oaks, and, guided by this warning and from other evidences, he directed the troops of Casey's and Couch's divisions to be under arms by eleven o'clock, and made such other dispositions as were possible to meet the coming attack.

The defensive features of the position held by the Fourth Corps consisted of a line of rifle pits at Seven Pines, at the junction of the Williamsburg and Nine-mile roads, which was held by Couch's division. About half a mile in advance, under construction, was an inclosed redoubt with rifle pits extending on both flanks, which was occupied by Casey's division. Midway between Casey and Couch a belt of timber had been cut down to form a slashing that extended to the woods on both sides of the clearing. Another slashing, not quite so extensive, had been made in the edge of the woods about eight hundred yards in front of Casey's division, and at about a mile and a half in rear of Seven Pines there was a third line of rifle pits, crossing the Williamsburg road. All of these intrenchments were in an unfinished state, and Casey's line in particular could offer but little resistance because the

rainy weather, the scarcity of intrenching tools and axes, and the short time it had been under construction, combined to retard its progress. Its weak point was the left flank, which, unless strongly guarded, was capable of being turned under cover of the dense woods that concealed the by-paths that crossed the head waters of the White Oak Swamp.

As the limits of this volume will not permit the detailed description of the battle of the 31st of May, it will suffice to confine our attention to those incidents which determined its important issues. Casey, upon whose division the brunt of Hill's attack was to fall, had disposed his troops as follows: Naglee's brigade on the right, Wessell's in the center, and Palmer's on the left. Naglee's, the strongest of the three, had one regiment off on the extreme right on the Nine-mile road, about seven hundred yards from Fair Oaks Station, supporting the line of pickets; another on the left of the York River Railroad, about five hundred yards south of Fair Oaks; his remaining three regiments, with the exception of seven companies of one and two companies of another on picket, were in support of Spratt's battery, which had been advanced about halfway between the redoubt and the edge of the woods beyond. The strength of this brigade taken into action was seventeen hundred and fifty-three officers and men. Wessell's brigade of four regiments of raw troops occupied the line of intrenchments, with the exception of the One Hundred and Third Pennsylvania, which just before the action commenced had been advanced to strengthen the line of pickets; its effective strength was two thousand and sixty-one, and, deducting its pickets and working party, left, according to its commander, about fifteen hundred as its fighting strength when the battle opened. Palmer's brigade of four regiments, also raw, sent forward two regiments to support Spratt's battery on the left, leaving the remaining two to hold the left of the main line; its fighting strength is reported by Palmer as about one thousand. Couch's division, half a mile to the rear of

Casey, had Abercrombie on the right, Devens in the center, and Peck on the left. Two regiments of Abercrombie's brigade and a battery were detached to guard the depot at Fair Oaks, thus leaving ten regiments and three batteries of Couch's division to hold the position to which it had been assigned. Heintzelman, in general charge of the troops on this side, appreciating the danger of Casey's critical position and not having sufficient confidence in his raw troops, moved Berry's and Birney's brigades of Kearny's division from their position at Bottom's Bridge to the third line of rifle pits, which they reached only at about noon of the 31st. Jameson's, the remaining brigade of this division at Bottom's Bridge, and Hooker's division at White Oak Swamp, some miles to the rear, complete the disposition of the troops of the Third and Fourth Corps of the army.

Late in the afternoon of the 30th, after Johnston had issued his orders for the next day's attack, a rain storm of unprecedented violence set in which lasted during the whole night, and although this was likely to delay the movements of his troops he did not countermand his orders for attack, for he believed its influence in preventing the crossing of McClellan's troops across the rapidly rising Chickahominy would more than offset any disadvantage in this respect. It was not, therefore, because of this storm that the movements for the 31st were ordered, as has so frequently been maintained, but he held to his purpose despite its deterring influence.

Returning now to the disposition of the thirteen brigades of the right wing of the Confederate army, we find that although there was some delay, owing to the storm, the more serious delay arose from Longstreet's misunderstanding of General Johnston's plan. Under his direction Wilcox's, Colston's, and Pryor's brigades of his own division were sent to the Charles City road as a support to Blanchard's and Armistead's brigades of Huger's division, and were, until about half past three o'clock, kept marching and counter-

marching on this road. Finally these brigades were ordered to march across to the Williamsburg road, which was reached by five o'clock. Mahone's brigade of Huger's division remained in observation out on the Charles City road until late that night, when it was ordered to the vicinity of Casey's redoubt, which it reached early the next morning. Pickett's brigade of Longstreet's division was ordered to move from the Williamsburg road, just as the battle opened on the 31st, to guard the York River Railroad, where it remained until night, and then was ordered to march at daylight the next morning and report to General D. H. Hill. The two remaining brigades of Longstreet's division (Jenkins's and Kemper's), commanded by General R. H. Anderson, were on the Williamsburg road supporting Hill's division.

The latter, comprising four brigades, was organized under cover of the woods for the direct attack of Casey's position, by placing Garland's brigade on the left of the Williamsburg road and Rodes on the right, each preceded by a regiment deployed as skirmishers. G. B. Anderson's brigade supported Garland, and Rains followed Rodes; the strength of this division was about nine thousand effectives, and it was scarcely possible that Casey's raw troops in their scattered disposition could withstand the onset of so formidable a body led by experienced commanders. But they resisted with unexpected stubbornness, until Rains, by moving to his right and finding the exposed flank of Casey's line, compelled the latter to retire upon Couch's position at Seven Pines. The stubborn fighting of Casey's raw troops had lasted for more than two hours, and Hill was compelled by the losses that he had experienced to call for assistance from Longstreet, who sent forward R. H. Anderson's fine brigade, under Colonel Jenkins. In the meantime Berry's brigade of Kearny's division had been sent forward, and though the message from Keyes to Heintzelman had been greatly delayed in transmission, it took position in the woods to the rear and left of Casey's line about

three o'clock, where it prevented any farther advance by the Confederates on this flank. But now, strengthened by Anderson's brigade, the Confederates were able to sweep away all resistance to their progress upon the right of the Union line, which the best efforts of Couch, upon whom the attack then fell, could not prevent. Couch, with two of his regiments, was cut off and forced in the direction of Fair Oaks, and, the way being opened, the Confederate troops poured down the Williamsburg road, forcing the bulk of the Union troops to seek the third line of intrenchments as a final point of resistance.* Here, at the third line, at the close of the day, they held their position, and preparations were made during the night to renew the contest the next morning, by the concentration of Keyes's corps, Berry's and Jameson's brigades of Kearny's division, and a brigade and two regiments of Hooker's division brought up from White Oak Swamp. Birney's brigade of Kearny's division, which had been moved up the York River Railroad during the afternoon, had not been engaged, but was in position to connect the Union right at Fair Oaks with the left at the third line.

Meantime, upon the Confederate left, General Johnston had moved out on the Nine-mile road with Whiting's division of five brigades, holding Magruder's division under arms near at hand as a support, and was awaiting the sound of Hill's musketry before giving the order to advance for attack. But the atmospheric conditions were such that afternoon that the intervening space was impervious to such sounds. Occasionally cannonading could be heard, but up to four o'clock no other indications of a severe battle were audible, and Johnston was uncertain whether or

* This was due in a great measure to the remarkable courage and persistent advance of three regiments, the Twenty-seventh Georgia and Fifth and Sixth South Carolina, under Colonel Jenkins, who successively drove before him the fragmentary forces of Union troops and opened the way down the Williamsburg road.

not his plan of battle, even as modified by Longstreet's misunderstanding, had miscarried until word was finally brought by a staff officer that the battle had been for some time in progress. This delay was exceedingly fortunate for Couch's small command of four regiments and battery that then constituted the entire Union right in the vicinity of Fair Oaks, for by the time that Whiting's pressure began to be felt Sedgwick's division of Sumner's corps had reached the Adams House, where a strong line of battle was established. This timely succor was due to the soldierly spirit of Sumner, who at the first indications of battle had advanced the heads of his two divisions to the bridges, anticipating the order to cross, which McClellan at once issued. Sumner's prompt action saved an hour—a most precious hour; and although the bridges did not appear to be passable, so great was the urgency that the attempt was made and was successfully accomplished by Sedgwick's division at the upper bridge, and by a portion only of Richardson's at the lower, before the latter gave way. Kirby's battery, through extraordinary exertions on the part of his men and other assisting troops, was the only one that could be brought forward in time to take part in the battle of that afternoon at Fair Oaks, and to the admirable handling of its guns Sumner's success was in a great measure due. Four brigades of Whiting persistently attempted to overthrow Sedgwick and Couch, but after suffering great loss they were compelled to desist. Johnston, who could not believe that McClellan had succeeded in crossing any of his troops, had started with Hood's brigade to aid Longstreet, who had called for assistance on the left of his line, but the strong resistance developed by Sumner compelled his presence on the left of the army, where about dusk he was so severely wounded that he was compelled to relinquish command, which then devolved upon General G. W. Smith, the next in rank.

At the close of the day the Confederate commander had not succeeded in his design of destroying the two

Union corps, and although he had driven the troops of Casey and Couch back to the third line of the Union position, there was not satisfactory evidence that these troops were demoralized; while Hill's division had been so severely punished that its active employment the next day was questionable. The Confederate left wing, on the other hand, had suffered a repulse, and, though not defeated, it could not without re-enforcement hope to be successful on another trial. Under these circumstances General Smith, the new Confederate commander, determined to open the attack the next morning with Longstreet's thirteen brigades, fighting toward the north and pivoting the movement on Whiting, who was to attack Sumner at the instant that Longstreet became engaged. As a support to Whiting, Ripley's brigade, which was expected to arrive at Richmond in time, was ordered forward by Lee, and was to be joined to one of Huger's that Longstreet was directed to transfer to the left. Griffith's and Semmes's brigades of Magruder's division were also ordered to support Whiting, and Cobb's and Kershaw's were moved nearer to New Bridge to replace them. During the night, however, Hill's division had been drawn back to the edge of the woods from whence they had emerged to attack on the 31st.

By daybreak on June 1st the Union forces in position were awaiting attack in the following order: On the extreme right, Sedgwick's division and Couch's four regiments faced west in line of battle, their right being about a half mile north of the Adams House and their left a few hundred yards east of the station at Fair Oaks. Next came Richardson's division, which, having been brought up during the night, was posted on the railroad, and thus formed with Sedgwick's line almost a right angle. On Richardson's left came Birney's brigade, to which the Seventh Massachusetts of Devens's brigade was temporarily attached and formed its right. On the left of Birney, occupying the third line of intrenchments, came Kearny's other two

brigades, then Casey's and Couch's divisions, and Sickles's brigade of Hooker's division. It will be seen from the disposition of the Union troops that an advance along the Williamsburg road would concentrate the three corps in the vicinity of Seven Pines, with the result of renewing the conflict upon the same battlefield as that of the preceding day. But there was no single authority to whom was confided the conduct of affairs, and, besides, the situation was not well understood either by Sumner, commanding on the right, nor Heintzelman on the left, and McClellan, on the other side of the Chickahominy, possessed only the most confused and contradictory information of the result of the day's battle. Under these circumstances no plan of battle was adopted by the two Union commanders, but they awaited the initiative of the Confederates. We have seen what plan had been devised by General Smith, the Confederate commander, but it was far from being carried out. The thirteen brigades forming Longstreet's command appear to have been under the direct control of General D. H. Hill, as there is no evidence that any of these brigades operated that day except by orders emanating from the latter officer. He had learned early on the morning of June 1st that the Union forces had been largely re-enforced during the night, and therefore determined to concentrate the thirteen Confederate brigades in and about Casey's redoubt in the hope that an attempt would be made by the enemy to attack, and accordingly gave orders for the advance brigades to draw in their lines and form near this position.

But early in the morning, before this was done, Hill had ordered an advance of Mahone's, Armistead's, and Pickett's brigades into the woods which intervened between Richardson's division, and thus brought on the battle of that day. The severest fighting occurred in the contest of Armistead's and Mahone's brigades against the left of French's brigade, the latter being re-enforced by Howard's and a portion of Meagher's brigades. Pickett's brigade, on Armistead's right, was

also badly punished by Birney's brigade and had to be re-enforced by a portion of Colston's. In the meanwhile Wilcox's and Pryor's brigades were attacked by five regiments of the Third Corps on the railroad, and by Sickles's brigade on the Williamsburg road, and after a short engagement were withdrawn because, as Wilcox asserts, of written orders of General Hill directing this withdrawal, owing to the bad behavior of Mahone's brigade in that morning's fight. The severity of the Confederate attack on French required nearly all of Richardson's division successfully to withstand it, and it was upon this division that the greatest Union losses fell. But they continually gained ground until the battle ceased, and about noon the two days' contest ended. During the second day the main struggle had therefore occurred between opposing forces of about five brigades on each side, in a square stand-up fight under no definite plan of battle. The losses during both days were, according to the best estimates available, as follows: On the Union side, seven hundred and ninety killed, thirty-five hundred and ninety-four wounded, and six hundred and forty-seven missing, aggregating five thousand and thirty-one. On the Confederate side, nine hundred and eighty killed, forty-seven hundred and forty-nine wounded, and four hundred and five missing, a total of sixty-one hundred and thirty-four.

On the night of the 2d of June the Confederate army, to the command of which General Robert E. Lee had been assigned the previous day, was withdrawn to the vicinity of Richmond, and the Union army re-occupied the lines of Casey and the ground in front of Fair Oaks, where a strong defensive line was at once projected and afterward constructed.

As in the battle of Williamsburg, so in this of Seven Pines and Fair Oaks, the influence of General McClellan's personal direction was most meagre. He did, it is true, order Sumner to be ready to move when shortly after one o'clock the firing of Hill's attack was heard, and did afterward direct him to cross in support of

Heintzelman. He was at that time suffering from sickness, having been confined to his bed for two days, and was not physically fit to exercise the active command. During the night of the 31st he had an interview with Heintzelman at the railway station on the left bank, and after learning what the latter's impressions were of the events of the day, told him that he relied upon him to hold the position at the third line of defense. About noon the next day he came to Sumner's headquarters, and afterward rode to Heintzelman's, receiving a splendid ovation from the troops as he passed on the way. He had then no intention of ordering an advance of the army, but directed his attention to hastening the construction of the bridges to reopen the communication between the two wings of the army.

But on the night of the 2d of June Longstreet's and Hill's divisions were withdrawn, the latter to the intrenchments they had occupied before the battle, and the former to the vicinity of Richmond, while Huger's division was held on the Williamsburg road in advance of Hill's, and Whiting's division was kept in close contact with Sumner's corps on the Nine-mile road. The close proximity of Whiting caused Sumner to apprehend an attack for two successive mornings, and Heintzelman was directed to support him should this happen. It thus appears that, so far as the Union forces were concerned, there was no immediate intention to do more than recover the ground from which they had been driven, and McClellan certainly did not intend to attempt the passage at New Bridge, while Sumner was apprehensive of being himself attacked at the same time. On the part of the Confederates, both Hill and Longstreet had lost their aggressiveness on the second day, doubtless because of the terrible losses experienced by those brigades that had been engaged, but it nowhere appears that these divisions were not ready for a stubborn fight, should such be the orders, for their organization and discipline were unimpaired.

The assignment of General Robert E. Lee to the command of the Confederate army was perhaps the

most fortunate event that could have happened to the Confederate cause, for, in addition to possessing the entire confidence of Mr. Davis, he was a thorough and accomplished soldier, and he had the great advantage of a personal knowledge of the characteristics of his antagonist. He immediately began the construction of the intrenched lines about Richmond, which afterward made the city a strongly intrenched camp, and enabled him to operate with the bulk of his army upon McClellan's right flank at the precise instant that such a movement offered the greatest advantages. During this waiting period he was enabled by his great influence and prestige to gather together as great an army as was possible for the Confederacy by drawing troops from far and near, and by the enforcement of the conscription act by the most rigorous measures.

With regard to McClellan's conduct of affairs subsequent to the battle of Fair Oaks, a fair summary may be drawn from his dispatches, letters, and orders that have been published in the Official War Records. From these it appears that it was Heintzelman's severe strictures upon the behavior of Casey's division, based upon imperfect knowledge of the events of the day and the uncertainty as to what the next day would bring forth, together with the knowledge of the destruction of Sumner's bridges, that aroused the gravest fears in the mind of McClellan. At twenty minutes past nine o'clock that night he ordered the engineers to push to the utmost all the works and approaches on the bridges, so as to be ready to cross artillery and infantry in the morning, and directed cooked rations and ammunition to be issued to Franklin's and Porter's corps in anticipation of the necessity of forcing the passage at New Bridge and at such others in the vicinity as were practicable. The debouches of these bridges, it must be remembered, were in possession of the enemy, and a movement of Sumner's corps toward Old Tavern would have been necessary to make this crossing a possibly successful one. But the raging torrent and the darkness of the night prevented much being accom-

plished before dawn, and it was not till a quarter past eight o'clock before New Bridge was built, and late in the afternoon that the trestle and pontoon bridges were practicable for infantry. The rising flood, however, made breaches in the causeway of New Bridge that lessened its availability for artillery crossing. More cheering news now began to be received from the battlefield, and it soon became evident that the advance of the enemy had been certainly checked and that he had suffered very serious losses. But even yet it was not certain that he would not again attack, and it then seemed advantageous to re-establish the former lines, strengthen them, and hold them until more permanent bridges, both of whose *débouchés* would be within the lines of the army, could be constructed uniting the two wings of the army. That this policy was due in a measure to the apprehension of Sumner that the enemy was on the point of attacking him on the morning of June 2d is exceedingly probable, and a waiting attitude was assumed until the permanent bridges were finished and promised re-enforcements arrived. As the whole matter of the Chickahominy bridges has been much misunderstood, it may be well to present the facts of the case according to the records.

Bottom's Bridge had served for the passage of Keyes's and Heintzelman's corps and was their means of communication with the right bank; the railroad bridge, a short distance above, afforded the means of supply to the two corps on the right bank shortly after they had there established themselves; Sumner's two bridges, ordered by McClellan and constructed by the troops of the Second Corps, had never been considered a part of the system of bridge connection under the control of the engineers, whose scheme had to do wholly with New Bridge and the two trestle bridges situated near the latter, and until their debouches on the enemy's side of the river were carried by an advance of the left wing of the army the engineers could do no more than complete the necessary arrangements for throwing the bridges at the proper time, an opera-

tion that would then have required but a few hours of labor. But in the unexpected and unforeseen state of affairs caused by the extraordinary freshet of the 31st of May it was beyond the power of men to do more than was done by the engineers that night. After the battle of Fair Oaks no immediate movement of an aggressive character was contemplated until the communications across the Chickahominy were greatly improved, and it was only from this moment that the intention of constructing any bridges other than those of New Bridge and its adjacent trestle bridges was seriously entertained. But now that the project of carrying the debouch of New Bridge on the enemy's side was temporarily abandoned, it was determined to construct five other bridges, both of whose debouches would be within the lines of the army. These were the "foot" bridge, about three quarters of a mile below New Bridge, available for infantry only; Duane's, next in order, practicable for all arms; then Woodbury's infantry bridge, Woodbury and Alexander's and the Grapevine Bridges, the last two being practicable for all arms and all being near the army headquarters. These were all completed by the 19th of June, and afforded as ample means of uniting the two wings of the army as the topography of the swamps and lowlands of the river would permit. About four miles below Grapevine Bridge the Railroad and Bottom's Bridges gave the most direct means of supply from the depot at White House Landing for that portion of the army on the right bank of the Chickahominy.

CHAPTER XII.

LEE'S PLANS.—STUART'S RAID.—BATTLE OF BEAVER DAM CREEK.—GAINES'S MILL.—RETREAT TO THE JAMES.—WHITE OAK BRIDGE.—GLENDALE.

After the battle of Fair Oaks McClellan determined to transfer the bulk of his army to the south side, but for several days the weather was most unpropitious. Frequent rains kept the Chickahominy full to its banks, made the roadways impassable for artillery, and greatly delayed the necessary preparations. He frequently assured the War Department that he would attack the enemy as soon as his bridges were ready and the conditions of the ground and weather were favorable. He repeated his requests for re-enforcements, and even suggested that part of Halleck's army should be sent to him from the West. In response to these urgent requests, McCall's division of McDowell's corps, about ninety-five hundred strong, was sent by water and reached him on the 12th and 13th of June, and he was informed by a message on the 11th that it was the intention of the War Department to send the residue of McDowell's command overland as speedily as possible. But McClellan the next day sent a remonstrance as to the proposed route of McDowell's movement, giving strong reasons against it, saying: "I beg leave to suggest that the destruction of the railroad bridges by flood and fire can not probably be remedied under four weeks; that an attempt to employ wagon transportation must involve great delay and may be found very difficult of accomplishment. An extension of my right wing to meet him may involve serious hazard to my flank and my line of com-

munications, and may not suffice to rescue from any peril in which a strong movement of the enemy may involve him. . . . The junction of his force with the extension of my right flank can not be made without a derangement of my plans, and if my recent experience of moving troops be indicative of the difficulties incident to McDowell's march, the exigencies of my present position will not admit of the delay." *

This certainly furnishes sufficient evidence that McClellan had no intention to modify, without further explicit orders, whatever plans he may have devised for the employment of his army to make them conform to the proposed overland march of McDowell's forces, and it is reasonable to suppose that he reached this conclusion at the time that Porter's expedition destroyed the bridges over the South Anna, about the last of May. The evident purpose in his mind was to gain a position on the south bank of the Chickahominy sufficiently near to Richmond to be able to lay siege to it, and he clearly perceived that in doing this his base of supplies at the White House would be put in jeopardy, unless, in the meanwhile, he should receive re-enforcements sufficient to cover that exposed and weak flank. But where, except from McDowell, could he hope to receive these re-enforcements in time to be of any service for immediate operations? In view of his repeated promises that, as soon as the weather was favorable and his bridges ready, he would move, it is difficult to understand the attitude that he afterward assumed in attempting to throw the blame of his failure upon the Administration, and to assert that the separation of the two wings of his army by the Chickahominy was due to his orders to await McDowell's coming.

In conformity with his general purpose to conduct his advance from the south side of the Chickahominy, Franklin's corps was transferred to that side on the 17th and placed on the right of the intrenched line in

* Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, 1863, part i, p. 335.

the vicinity of Golding's farm, and Porter, strengthened by McCall's division, was charged with the control of the operations of the right wing on the north bank. McClellan's headquarters were established at Trent's House on the south bank on the 12th, and under his direct supervision the defensive line covering the four corps of his army on that bank approached completion. But the enemy in his immediate front were also busy strengthening their defensive line to cover the approaches into Richmond, which they screened from all attempts to reconnoiter by a strong picket line that was ever active and sometimes aggressive. All that McClellan at this time deemed possible was to attempt a slight advance on the Williamsburg road to secure advantageous ground on his left, so that Franklin might the more surely make an attack upon Old Tavern about the 26th with some prospect of success. Gaining this position, McClellan would then be near enough to Richmond to begin its siege, and at the same time secure the debouch of New Bridge and thus bring Porter's corps closer to the rest of the army. But in the interim he was not buoyed up with the certainty of success; the tone of his dispatch of the 20th of June to the President reveals rather apprehension of disaster, for he says: "There is not the slightest reason to suppose that the enemy intends evacuating Richmond; he is daily increasing his defenses. I find him everywhere in force, and every reconnoissance costs many valuable lives. Yet I am obliged to feel my way foot by foot at whatever cost, so great are the difficulties of the country. By to-morrow night the defensive works covering our position on this side the Chickahominy should be completed. I am forced to this by my inferiority of numbers, so that I may bring the greatest possible numbers into action, and secure the army against the consequences of unforeseen disaster." *

* McClellan's Own Story, p. 390; and Official War Records, vol. xi, part i, p. 48.

And then follows this most remarkable request, which subsequently brought out the astounding letter which he handed to the President at Harrison's Landing on the 7th of July following: "I would be glad to have permission to lay before your Excellency, by letter or telegraph, my views as to the present state of military affairs throughout the whole country. In the meantime I would be pleased to learn the disposition as to numbers and position of the troops not under my command in Virginia and elsewhere."

One can not analyze the private and official correspondence of McClellan, nor study the disposition of the various portions of his army during the fortnight that preceded the opening of the Seven Days' fight, without being impressed with the conviction that his generalship was not up to the standard that the situation demanded. In arriving at a just estimate of the soundness of his views in the disposition of his army we are obliged to reason from the same premises which guided him in reaching his conclusions, and one of the most erroneous of these was his overestimate of the enemy's strength. Accepting that of the chief of his secret service, which placed Lee's army after Jackson had joined at two hundred thousand, and knowing that his own returns for the 20th of June gave him but one hundred and fifteen thousand one hundred and two present for duty, or but about ninety-five thousand for battle formation, he was confronted with so great a disparity that he felt able only to act on the defensive, and that with the greatest caution. But in reality the Confederate effective was not greatly different from that of McClellan's, a few thousand more or less either way not being sufficient in general to affect the result of possible tactical combinations in such a field of battle. This constitutional defect of McClellan's judgment in overestimating the strength of the enemy was ever in evidence, in West Virginia, on the Potomac, at Yorktown, and now on the Chickahominy; it seriously detracted from his efficiency as a commander, compelling him to adopt

a cautious and inactive course when he should have been bold and aggressive. His requests for additional re-enforcements were therefore unceasing, to the end, first, that his strength should be made equal to that which he conceived the enemy to possess, and next, should be made so superior as to insure so decisive a victory in the great battle that he expected to fight as to bring the war speedily to an end. It was constitutionally impossible for him to reason correctly upon this subject, probably because the exuberance of his vivid imagination gave no ground for the exercise of his analytical powers.

From this fundamental error all the progeny of procrastinating movements and false positions arose. McClellan's repeated promises to attack upon the arrival of McCall's division failed of fulfillment, just as similar promises with regard to Franklin's division at Yorktown had failed. A waiting policy seems to stand out distinctly as the result of the study and thought he gave to his problem. To hold on to the left bank of the Chickahominy, and to advance foot by foot on the right bank until he could gain a position so near to Richmond that the siege guns and mortars could reach it, seemed the best he could do. And while so doing he intended to hold the bulk of his army in close relations to their strong defensive line so as to give it the preponderating advantage in case of attack. There is no doubt that he recognized the weakness of his exposed right flank and the unfortunate position of his line of supply from the White House, but he expected by persistent importunity to get sufficient re-enforcements to make these reasonably secure.

On the other hand, his antagonist, General Lee, perceived that it was especially incumbent upon him to cause McClellan to loosen his grip upon Richmond at the earliest possible moment, for not only was the existing status seriously detrimental to the Confederate cause at home and abroad, but there was a strong probability that McClellan might be so greatly re-enforced in the near future that the task would be beyond

the power of the Confederate government to perform. Within a week after his assignment to the command of the Confederate army Lee had formulated a simple yet bold plan of operations. It was, "to construct defensive lines in front of Richmond, so as to enable a part of the army to defend the city and leave the other part free to cross the Chickahominy and operate on the left bank. By sweeping down the river on that side and threatening his communications with York River it was thought that the enemy would be compelled to retreat or give battle out of his intrenchments." This plan having received the approval of Mr. Davis, every means within the power of the Confederate Executive was employed to strengthen the Confederate army at Richmond, not the least of which was the rigid enforcement of the wide-embracing Conscription Act, approved April 16th, and which subjected every white man resident in the Confederate States, between the ages of eighteen and forty-five years, to conscription for the military service.

The co-operation of Jackson was essential to the success of this plan; but at this time he was retreating up the Shenandoah Valley after his successful campaign against Banks, pursued by Fremont and Shields, who were endeavoring to effect a junction before bringing him to battle. His superior military ability, however, enabled him to defeat this purpose June 8th and 9th, and the battles of Cross Keys and Port Republic were so favorable to him and unfortunate to his opponents as to relieve him from all apprehension of farther pursuit. By this time Lee had informed him of his general plan, and again on the 11th, after hearing of Jackson's victories, sent him word that he was to be re-enforced with six regiments under General Lawton from Georgia and eight veteran regiments from Richmond under Whiting, to enable him to crush the enemy in his front, so that he could then speedily return with all his strength to aid in the general plan against McClellan, which was outlined to him. His instructions were: "Leave your enfeebled troops to watch the

country and guard the passes covered by your cavalry and artillery, and with your main body, including Ewell's division and Lawton's and Whiting's commands, move rapidly to Ashland by rail or otherwise, as you may find most advantageous, and sweep down between the Chickahominy and Pamunkey, cutting up the enemy's communications, etc., while this army attacks General McClellan in front. He will thus, I think, be forced to come out of his intrenchments, where he is strongly posted on the Chickahominy, and apparently preparing to move by gradual approaches on Richmond. Keep me advised of your movements, and, if practicable, precede your troops, that we may confer and arrange for simultaneous attack."

McClellan heard on the 18th of the dispatch of these re-enforcements to Jackson, and, in communicating the information to the President, expressed the opinion that, if it were true, it illustrated the strength and confidence of the enemy in front of him; but the President, with better discernment, suggested that it was probably meant to deceive, but at all events, if it were true, it would be equivalent to a re-enforcement to McClellan of an equal number.

To gain intelligence with regard to the dispositions of the troops and the character of the defenses of the Union right flank for his guidance in formulating his orders for the contemplated movement, Lee directed General Stuart to make a secret movement to the right and rear of the Union position. With a force of about twelve hundred cavalry and two pieces of horse artillery, all fresh and in excellent condition, this expedition started at dawn on the 13th of June from the vicinity of Ashland, where they had secretly bivouacked the night before, and headed for Hanover Court House, distant two hours' ride. By celerity of movement and vigor in attack the small outlying detachments of Union scouts, pickets, and supports were quickly dispersed until the position at Old Church was reached. Here, at about four o'clock in the afternoon, the main support of two squadrons of the Fifth United States

cavalry, under the command of Captain Royall, was attacked and defeated and their camp burned. By this time Stuart had learned that the Totopotomy was not strengthened by artificial defenses, and that the Union right flank was in the air, the specially important information that General Lee desired to obtain, and the main purpose of the expedition was thus attained. To return in the direction of Hanover Court House Stuart recognized would be particularly hazardous, in view of the fact that the Union forces would certainly gather in sufficient force to oppose him. He therefore boldly adopted an unexpected course, and pushed on toward Tunstall's Station on the York River Railroad, with the intention of crossing the Chickahominy at Forge Bridge and thus complete his circuit in rear of the Union army. The very audacity of the plan caused it to be successful. On his way he destroyed some barges at Garlick's Landing, captured some prisoners and stores at Tunstall's, and made good his escape across an improvised bridge before the forces organized for his pursuit had struck his trail. This successful raid demonstrated the vulnerability of McClellan's line of communications with White House, and probably directed his attention to the possibility of its early abandonment for a base on the James, and satisfied General Lee that his plan of attacking the Union right flank possessed all the elements of success.

Accordingly, on the 16th of June, the next day after the return of Stuart, General Lee, having come to a decision that the time was ripe for his contemplated movement, wrote to Jackson: "I have received your letter by the Hon. Mr. Boteler. I hope you will be able to recruit and refresh your troops sufficiently for the movement proposed in my letter of the 11th. You have only acknowledged my letter of the 8th; I am therefore ignorant whether that of the 11th has reached you. From your account of the position of the enemy I think it would be difficult for you to engage him in time to unite with this army in the battle for Richmond. Fremont and Shields are apparently retrograding, their

troops shaken and disorganized, and some time will be required to set them again in the field. If this is so, the sooner you unite with this army the better. McClellan is being strengthened; Burnside is with him, and some of McDowell's troops are also reported to have joined him. There is much sickness in his ranks, but his re-enforcements by far exceed his losses. The present, therefore, seems to be favorable for a junction of your army and this. If you agree with me, the sooner you can make arrangements to do so the better. In moving your troops you could let it be understood that it was to pursue the enemy in your front. Dispose those to hold the Valley so as to deceive the enemy, keeping your cavalry well in their front, and at the proper time suddenly descending upon the Pamunkey. To be efficacious, the movement must be secret. Let me know the force you can bring, and be careful to guard from friends and foes your purpose and intention of personally leaving the Valley. The country is full of spies, and our plans are immediately carried to the enemy. Please inform me what arrangements you can make for subsisting your troops. Beef cattle could at least be driven, and, if necessary, we can subsist on meat alone.

"Unless McClellan can be driven out of his intrenchments he will move by positions under cover of his heavy guns within shelling distance of Richmond. I know of no surer way of thwarting him than that proposed. I should like to have the advantage of your views and be able to confer with you. Will meet you at some point on your approach to the Chickahominy. I inclose a copy of my letter of the 11th, lest the original should not have reached you."

The sequence of events that brought Lee's army into position may now be briefly outlined. Jackson's forced march from Port Republic toward Richmond began on the 17th, and the head of his column reached Meachum's River Station at midday on the 19th, and, following the general direction of the railroad, arrived at Gordonsville about noon on the 21st. Here he in-

vestigated a rumor that a heavy Union force was advancing from the Rapidan some sixteen miles distant, and finding it false, ordered his troops forward and himself hastened to Richmond for the conference desired by General Lee. By the night of the 25th he had assembled his whole command around Ashland Station, on the Richmond and Fredericksburg Railroad, a movement characterized by such celerity and secrecy that no hint of it had reached the authorities at Washington, and at that time only an unsupported rumor had been carried to McClellan by the capture of a Confederate spy the day before.

At the conference held by General Lee on the 23d, at which were present Longstreet, A. P. Hill, D. H. Hill, and Jackson, the details of the contemplated movement were decided upon, and, in accordance with these, Lee issued, on the 24th, his orders as follows:

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA, *June* 24, 1862.

General Orders No. 75.

I. General Jackson's command will proceed to-morrow from Ashland toward the Slash Church and encamp at some convenient point west of the Central Railroad. Branch's brigade, of A. P. Hill's division, will also to-morrow evening take position on the Chickahominy near Half-Sink. At three o'clock, Thursday morning, 26th instant, General Jackson will advance on the road leading to Pole Green Church, communicating his march to General Branch, who will immediately cross the Chickahominy and take the road leading to Mechanicsville. As soon as the movements of these columns are discovered, General A. P. Hill, with the rest of his division, will cross the Chickahominy near Meadow Bridge and move upon Mechanicsville. To aid his advance, the heavy batteries on the Chickahominy will at the proper time open upon the batteries at Mechanicsville. The enemy being driven from Mechanicsville and the passage across the bridge opened, General Longstreet, with his division and that of General D. H. Hill, will cross the Chickahominy at or near that point, General D. H. Hill moving to the support of General Jackson, and General Longstreet supporting General A. P. Hill. The four divisions, keeping in communication with each other and moving in echelon on separate roads, if practicable, the left division in advance, with skirmishers and sharpshooters extending their front, will sweep down the

Chickahominy and endeavor to drive the enemy from his position above New Bridge, General Jackson bearing well to his left, turning Beaver Dam Creek, and taking the direction toward Cold Harbor. They will then press forward toward the York River Railroad, closing upon the enemy's rear and forcing him down the Chickahominy. Any advance of the enemy toward Richmond will be prevented by vigorously following his rear and crippling and arresting his progress.

II. The divisions under Generals Huger and Magruder will hold their positions in front of the enemy against attack, and make such demonstrations Thursday as to discover his operations. Should opportunity offer, the feint will be converted into a real attack, and should an abandonment of his intrenchments by the enemy be discovered, he will be closely pursued.

III. The Third Virginia Cavalry will observe the Charles City road. The Fifth Virginia, the First North Carolina, and the Hampton Legion (cavalry) will observe the Darbytown, Varina, and Osborne roads. Should a movement of the enemy down the Chickahominy be discovered, they will close upon his flank and endeavor to arrest his march.

IV. General Stuart, with the First, Fourth, and Ninth Virginia Cavalry, the cavalry of Cobb's Legion and the Jeff Davis Legion, will cross the Chickahominy to-morrow and take position to the left of General Jackson's line of march. The main body will be held in reserve, with scouts well extended to the front and left. General Stuart will keep General Jackson informed of the movements of the enemy on his left, and will co-operate with him in his advance. The Tenth Virginia Cavalry, Colonel Davis, will remain on the Nine-mile road.

V. General Ransom's brigade, of General Holmes's command, will be placed in reserve on the Williamsburg road by General Huger, to whom he will report for orders.

VI. Commanders of divisions will cause their commands to be provided with three days' cooked rations. The necessary ambulances and ordnance trains will be ready to accompany the divisions and receive orders from their respective commanders. Officers in charge of all trains will invariably remain with them. Batteries and wagons will keep on the right of the road. The chief engineer, Major Stevens, will assign engineer officers to each division, whose duty it will be to make provision for overcoming all difficulties to the progress of the troops. The staff departments will give the necessary instructions to facilitate the movements herein directed.*

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* Official War Records, vol. xi, part ii, p. 498.

General Lee's distinctness of purpose and knowledge of the situation as outlined in the above order were clear and precise. He knew with considerable accuracy the strength and disposition of McClellan's army and that its vulnerable point was its right flank, and made his dispositions accordingly. He also knew that Jackson's operations had eliminated for the time being the forces of Frémont, Shields, and Banks, then more than a hundred miles to the northwest, and that McDowell, more than forty miles to the north, could not be brought within the theater of operations in time to be of the least avail in the way of assistance to McClellan. On the other hand, General McClellan believed, up to the 24th of June, that Jackson was in the upper Shenandoah Valley, and could scarcely leave there to join Lee without being followed by the Union forces in his front and due intelligence sent him by telegraph of the fact. His overestimate of the Confederate strength in his immediate front was so erroneous that he was committed by prudential considerations to a strictly defensive policy behind his intrenched lines, and with the single exception of designing an attack to capture a position at Old Tavern, a few hundred yards in front of Golding's farm on the Chickahominy, he did so confine himself. Under these circumstances it is not difficult to determine which of these two commanders was at that time the greater master of the art of war.

On the 24th of June, Colonel Farnsworth, in command of the Union outposts on the upper Chickahominy, captured an unusually shrewd and intelligent Confederate spy named Charles Rian, who, under close examination, revealed the fact that Jackson's advance had reached Frederick's Hall Station on its way to Richmond to re-enforce Lee, with the expectation of attacking McClellan's right flank about the 28th. This information was sufficiently plausible and alarming as to cause McClellan to telegraph the circumstance to the War Department and to ask for information as to Jackson's whereabouts, but the answer disclosed the

fact that the War Department was as ignorant upon this point as McClellan himself. At 6.15 P. M. the next day McClellan replies: "I have just returned from the field, and found your dispatch in regard to Jackson. Several contrabands just in give information confirming supposition that Jackson's advance is at or near Hanover Court House, and that Beauregard arrived with strong re-enforcements in Richmond yesterday.

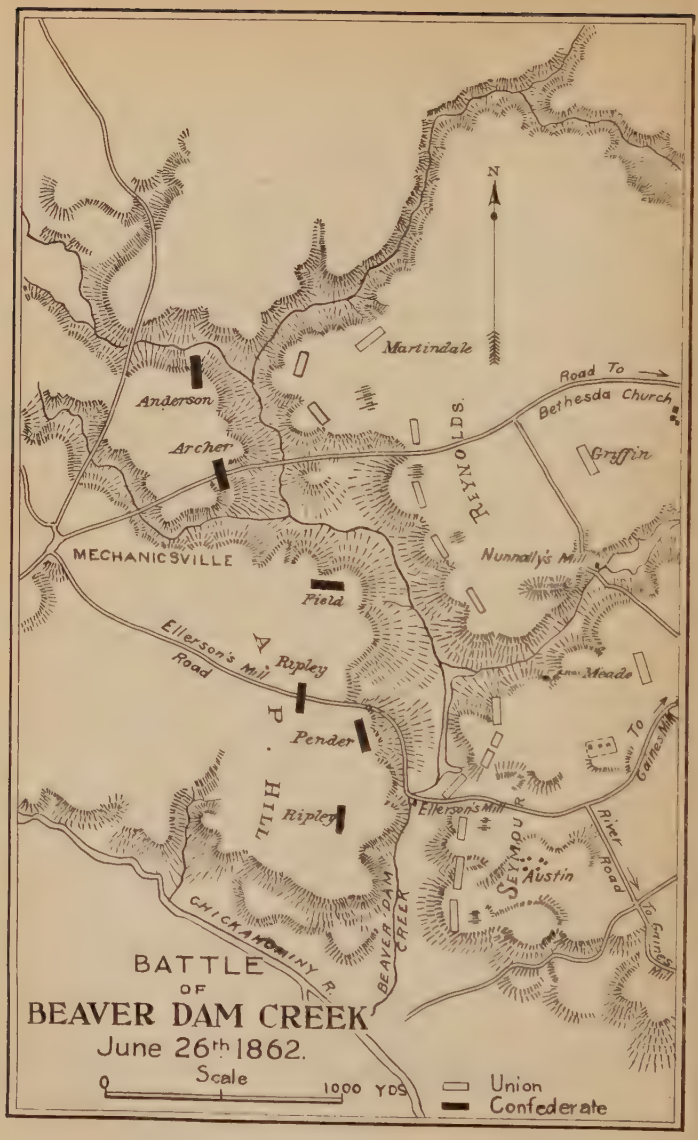
"I incline to think that Jackson will attack my right and rear. The rebel force is stated at two hundred thousand, including Jackson and Beauregard. I shall have to contend against vastly superior odds if these reports be true. But this army will do all in the power of men to hold their position and repulse any attack. I regret my great inferiority of numbers, but feel that I am in no way responsible for it, as I have not failed to represent repeatedly the necessity of re-enforcements, that this was the decisive point, and that all the available means of the Government should be concentrated here. I will do all that a general can do, with the splendid army I have the honor to command, and if it is destroyed by overwhelming numbers, can at least die with it and share its fate.

"But if the result of the action, which will probably occur to-morrow or within a short time, is a disaster, the responsibility can not be thrown on my shoulders; it must rest where it belongs. Since I commenced this, I have received additional intelligence confirming the supposition in regard to Jackson's movements and Beauregard's arrival. I shall probably be attacked to-morrow, and now go to the other side of the Chickahominy to arrange for the defense on that side. I feel that there is no use in my again asking for re-enforcements."

It is difficult to understand the mental attitude that caused McClellan to indite so desponding a message. It can only be accounted for under the supposition that his strongly imaginative cast of mind unduly influenced the logical conclusions of his reason. Doubts continually assailed him and weakened his intellectual

vigor. Many evidences of this irresolution are found in his correspondence. Thus, on the 15th, he hoped to attack Old Tavern on the 17th or 18th, push the enemy behind his works into Richmond, bring up his heavy guns, shell the city, and carry it by assault. Again, on the 21st he hoped to do it within a couple of days, but the next day he thinks he ought to be prudent, and the day after he has a presentiment that something, he knows not what, is going to happen. Finally, he decides on the 24th to take a decisive step, which, if successful, will place him a couple of miles nearer to Richmond.

This last decision brought on the affair known as Oak Grove, where the participants were two brigades of Hooker's and one of Couch's divisions of Heintzelman's corps, resisted by two brigades of Huger's and one of Holmes's divisions. McClellan's object was to gain possession of a piece of timber crossing the Williamsburg road between the intrenched lines of the two armies for the better posting of Heintzelman's and Sumner's corps in the contemplated attack of Franklin on Old Tavern. The affair was a spirited one, being gallantly maintained by the Union troops and obstinately resisted by the Confederates. But after Hooker had been engaged for some three hours he was directed to withdraw from the advanced position which he had gained due to some misapprehension of the state of affairs at general headquarters, but McClellan arriving opportunely upon the field, he promptly rectified the mistaken order and directed Hooker again to advance, and the desired position was occupied. At five o'clock in the afternoon McClellan was satisfied that substantial advantage had been gained for the object in view, and hopefully looked for the morrow to push Franklin forward upon Old Tavern. But upon his return to headquarters he found awaiting him the direful news of the presence of Jackson in the vicinity of Hanover Court House, and the sudden change from confidence in himself to a state almost of demoralization is depicted in the message


N
Martindale
Road To
Bethesda Church
Anderson
Archer
REYNOLDS
Griffin
MECHANICSVILLE
Nunnally's Mill
Field
Ellerson's Mill
Road
A. P. HILL
Ripley
Meade
Pender
To
Gaines Mill
Ripley
Ellerson's Mill
River
Road
To
Gaines Mill
Austin
CHICKAHOMINY R.
BEAVER DAM
CREEK
BATTLE
OF
BEAVER DAM CREEK
June 26th 1862.
Scale
0
1000 YDS
Union
Confederate

already quoted. Hastening to Porter's headquarters in this frame of mind, he could only anticipate disaster under the mistaken view that he then entertained of the greatly preponderating strength of the enemy as compared with his own. He directed that an outlying flanking force, consisting of two regiments of cavalry, two of infantry, and a battery of artillery, drawn from Porter's command, be formed under the command of General Stoneman, to operate from Old Church to retard Jackson's advance. This force moved out early on the 26th, and so efficiently did it perform the duty assigned to it, by obstructing roads, destroying bridges over the Totopotomoy, and by its active resistance, as to prevent Jackson from taking part in the engagement at Beaver Dam Creek, as contemplated in General Lee's plan. Other than this McClellan took no decided step looking to aggressive measures. About noon on the 26th he notified the Secretary of War that his cavalry pickets were being driven in on the right, probably by Jackson's advance guard. Then he says: "If this be true, you may not hear from me for some days, as my communications will probably be cut off. The case is perhaps a difficult one, but I shall resort to desperate measures, and will do my best to outmaneuver, outwit, and outfight the enemy." At 2.30 P. M. the same day he knows definitely that Jackson is actually driving in his pickets, and acknowledges that his telegraphic communication can not be maintained much longer. Up to this time, therefore, with the exception noted, he remains in a waiting attitude, his troops being disposed as follows:

On the extreme right flank, separated from the remainder of the army, was Fitz-John Porter's corps, comprising three divisions, aggregating about twenty-five thousand men. On the right bank of the Chickahominy the other four corps, aggregating about seventy thousand men, were behind the intrenched line stretching from Golding's to the head waters of White Oak Swamp—a line about three and a half miles long; Franklin, Sumner, Heintzelman, and Keyes in

the order named from right to left. A portion of Keyes's corps was, however, farther to the rear guarding the White Oak Swamp Bridge and the crossing at Bottom's Bridge; Casey was in command of the troops protecting the depot at White House Landing; and Stoneman, as before stated, commanded the flanking outlying force guarding the country between the Pamunkey and Hanover Court House. Porter's corps, upon whom the brunt of the fighting was to fall, was thus disposed: Seymour's and Reynolds's brigades of McCall's division occupied a strong defensive line on the left bank of Beaver Dam Creek, which had been made yet stronger by infantry and artillery intrenchments, Meade's brigade being in reserve, and a regiment of infantry with a battery occupied Mechanicsville as an advanced force. Cavalry and infantry pickets also watched the bridges at Mechanicsville, the Meadow Bridges, and beyond to the near vicinity of Atlee's Station on the Virginia Central Railroad. The other two divisions of Porter's corps, Morell's and Sykes's, were in the vicinity of Gaines's Farm, in support of McCall, watching New Bridge, and connecting him with the bridges over the Chickahominy.

The dispositions of the Confederate forces to carry out the aggressive movement contemplated by General Lee's order were, with the exception of Jackson's command, all promptly executed. Longstreet and D. H. Hill withdrew their divisions from their places in front of Richmond at 2 and 3 A. M. on the 26th, and marched to their bivouacs on the Richmond side of the Mechanicsville Bridge ready to cross at the appointed time. A. P. Hill, with five of his brigades, was similarly placed at the Meadow Bridges, and his remaining brigade, under Branch, was at Winston's Bridge awaiting information from Jackson that he was crossing the Virginia Central Railroad before he put his troops in motion. But Jackson, who was expected to move from Slash Church at 3 A. M., did not reach Ashland until the night of the 25th, and accordingly he was

six hours late in crossing the railroad. Branch did not therefore get under way until about ten o'clock, while A. P. Hill, impatiently waiting for news of the approach of Branch and Jackson, and fearing that a longer delay on his own part might jeopardize the success of General Lee's plan, took the initiative without further orders, and began the crossing at the Meadow Bridges at three o'clock in the afternoon. But General Lee, apprehensive lest the long delay consequent upon Jackson's tardiness might prevent him from carrying out his plan at so late an hour, sent a message to A. P. Hill to suspend his movement, which, however, did not reach Hill in time, and this resulted in the battle of Mechanicsville, or, as it is called by the Union forces, Beaver Dam Creek. Of the remaining Confederate forces, Magruder's and Huger's divisions occupied the intrenchments skirting the Chickahominy and the line from Old Tavern to beyond the Charles City road, in aggregate about twenty-five thousand men, Huger having been strengthened by Ransom's and Walker's brigades of Holmes's division from Petersburg and Drewry's Bluff; leaving Daniell's brigade at Drewry's and Wise's brigade at Chaffin's Bluff, besides other detached commands at Petersburg to watch the extreme right flank of the Confederate position while the turning movement was in process of execution.

Porter's understanding of the duty expected of him by General McClellan was derived from a dispatch sent to him on the 23d by the chief of staff, in which, after stating that the disposition of his forces was approved by the commanding general, he says: "If you are attacked, be careful to state as promptly as possible the number, composition, and position of the enemy. The troops on this side will be held ready either to support you directly or to attack the enemy in their front. If the force attacking you is large, the general would prefer the latter course, counting upon your skill and the admirable troops under your command to hold their own against superior numbers long

enough for him to make the decisive movement which will determine the fate of Richmond." But on the 26th, when the greatly superior forces of the enemy were moving to attack Porter at Beaver Dam Creek, McClellan had made no provision to carry out this intention by forming his columns of assault on the south bank of the Chickahominy. And had Jackson been in time for his turning movement, it is certain that Porter's corps would have been disastrously defeated, if not entirely captured or destroyed.

As it was, however, A. P. Hill, without waiting for, though expecting, Jackson, advanced with impetuosity to attack the admirable defensive position where Reynolds's and Seymour's brigades of McCall's division were in battle formation behind their intrenched lines. The stream in their front was only waist deep, but its banks were bordered by swamps and protected by slashings, while the ground in front was well swept by the artillery and infantry fire of the Union troops. As the only practicable crossings for artillery were the two bridges on the Bethesda Church and Ellerson's Mill roads, Hill's effort was mainly directed against those points. Anderson's brigade, diverted to the left before reaching Mechanicsville, was directed toward the right of the Union position; Field, in advance, pushed toward the right center, while Archer kept straight on the Bethesda road to carry the crossing, and Pender was directed toward the bridge at Ellerson's Mill. Unaware of the difficult and dangerous task confided to them, the Confederate troops deployed with conspicuous bravery and moved forward to the assault, first against the Union right and afterward against the left. Both attempts were disastrously repulsed by the gallant men of Reynolds's and Seymour's brigades. Finally re-enforced by Ripley's brigade of D. H. Hill's division, which had just crossed at Mechanicsville, another attempt was made to carry the position, which likewise failed. In this affair, which ended about 9 P. M., the Confederates lost nearly two thousand men, while the casualties of the

Union troops amounted to only three hundred and sixty-one.

While Porter's advanced division, under McCall, was thus stubbornly holding Beaver Dam Creek against A. P. Hill's unsupported attack and in imminent danger of having its right turned by Jackson's advance, aided by Longstreet's and D. H. Hill's divisions, which were then crossing at Mechanicsville, McClellan was at his own headquarters on the south side of the Chickahominy, endeavoring to come to some decision as to his course of action. That he had in view the abandonment of his base at White House Landing is evidenced from the fact that on the 18th he directed his chief commissary, Colonel H. F. Clarke, to have eight hundred thousand rations forwarded from Yorktown to the vicinity of City Point on the James River; and on the 23d, 25th, and 26th of June his chief quartermaster, General Van Vliet, was similarly directed to take precautionary measures for the transportation of food and forage supplies from the depots at White House to the James, and to abandon the base at that point should it become necessary by the rapid development of events. By noon of the 26th he must have become convinced that he must either receive battle on the left bank of the Chickahominy, or, abandoning this bank by withdrawing Porter and cutting loose from his base, concentrate his whole army on the right bank and seek a new base on the James. Still undecided in the afternoon, and hoping to hold on to the left bank, he directed his chief engineer, General Barnard, to reconnoiter a position covering his bridges, and some time after four o'clock in the afternoon hastened to confer with General Porter. In view of the grave importance of the battle of Gaines's Mill upon the fortunes of the Army of the Potomac, and of the insight it gives of McClellan's characteristics at this critical time, Barnard's account of his mission deserves insertion. He says: "It had been known some days previous to this that Jackson's command had reached Frederick's Hall Station

on its way from the Shenandoah, and there was presumptive evidence that an attack on our right wing was meditated by the concentrated forces of the enemy, and that, too, on the 27th. It was understood by me to be the intention of the commanding general to concentrate our own forces either on one side or other of the Chickahominy; and so far as I could infer, from a conversation in which no positive decision was announced on his part, the plan to which preference was given was, after the enemy's plans should be sufficiently developed, to withdraw from the left bank of the Chickahominy, concentrate on the right bank, and attack Richmond while the enemy was massed on the other side. Indeed, the work thrown up on the night of the 26th (that in front of Golding's farm) was understood to be a preparation for an attack to be made on the morning of the 27th.

"On the afternoon of the 26th I was told by the commanding general that, in case of withdrawing from the other side (left bank), he would still be glad to maintain his hold on that side in order to be able to recross, should events make it necessary or desirable. I said to him that I thought with any small force it was impracticable to hold the *débouchés* of all our bridges, or even those from Duane's down to Sumner's upper bridge, but that possibly the heads of the two important bridges, Alexander and Woodbury's and Sumner's upper bridges (which were within a few hundred yards of each other) might be held. He desired me to go that afternoon and reconnoiter the ground for a position for that purpose. This was probably about 4 P. M.

"I left the headquarters camp (then in rear of Dr. Trent's) as soon as I could get my horses, and proceeded on this reconnoissance. I had passed the Chickahominy when I was overtaken by an aide-de-camp (Lieutenant Custer), who informed me that the commanding general desired to modify his instructions; that he wished me to reconnoiter a position extending from near to Dr. Gaines's to Barker's Mill

Pond. He (Lieutenant Custer) asked for my map, and sketched with a pencil a line extending between those limits. How or by what force it was intended to occupy that position I was not informed.

"I took the road by McGee's house to New Cold Harbor and to Dr. Gaines's; thence back on to the spur on the right of Dr. Gaines's; thence through the woods to New Cold Harbor again; thence to Old Cold Harbor; thence by the road to Dispatch Station to near where I started; thence by the same road to near Barker's sawmill.

"It was late when I commenced, and I had been obliged to ride fast. When I reached Barker's Mill it was getting dark and I proceeded from thence back to camp. I thought that a position moderately favorable for a large force to fight a battle, in equal or not greatly inferior numbers, might be taken along this line, but not one which gave any very decided advantages. According to the force in which it was occupied, its left would rest on the first spur to the right (east) of Dr. Gaines's house, embracing the woods; or, contracting the front, rest on the spur where Watt's house is, partially embracing the woods in front, and running in front of McGee's house. The right would extend past McGee's house, along the Dispatch Station road through the woods, to the eminence near where a house is marked on the map; or, perhaps still better, keep along the edge of the woods toward the Chickahominy.

"When I returned to headquarters camp after dark I found that the commanding general had left for General Porter's camp, having been summoned either by General Porter himself, or by the sound of the attack made late that afternoon. At 10 P. M. I received a telegram directing me to repair at once to General Porter's headquarters. I reached there about midnight, and found the commanding general and General Porter together in bivouac (all camp equipage, wagons, etc., having been sent to the other side). After explaining on the map to the commanding gen-

eral what I had done in the afternoon, he rose to leave, intimating that he desired me to remain with General Porter.

"On his leaving, General Porter seemed to be in doubt whether he should withdraw his troops from their actual positions. Finding that he had no positive instructions, I told him that I supposed it indispensable to fall back, at least to the position covering the bridges, in order to put himself in communication with the rest of the army; and he issued his orders to this effect about 1 A. M. (27th), and at dawn or early daylight the troops were in motion near us, falling back.

"At this time the doubts seemed to have revived in General Porter's mind as to the expediency of the movement, he alleging the probability of McCall's division being cut to pieces in the operation. I could only repeat my conviction that it was indispensable in order to put himself in connection with the rest of the army, and it was continued; and we proceeded together to the ground I visited the evening before. On the way, or before starting, he asked me how many troops I thought he ought to be re-enforced with. I replied substantially that I could not answer the question; that, according to any understanding I had of the matter, I supposed that the whole army was to fight on one side or the other; that I had all along supposed that he was to retire to the other side.

"After reaching the ground he put his left on the spur of Watt's house, and, riding farther along the position, he concluded he could not extend his right beyond the clearing and spur where McGee's house is. After this I returned to headquarters, presuming that in reference to the arrangements of the day the commanding general might have further instructions for me. I reached headquarters about 9 or 10 A. M., and, being informed that the commanding general was reposing, I went to my tent and remained there until afternoon.

"I have gone somewhat minutely into the history of my connection with that battlefield, because upon

this battle, fought by General Porter with twenty-seven thousand men, hinged the fate of the campaign." *

From this narration it is evident that the important position selected to cover the bridges by Porter's corps was hurriedly chosen. For more than a month the site had been in undisturbed possession of the Union forces, and for half of that period had been within touch of general headquarters. Certainly from the 24th the probability of its occupation should have been patent to the commanding general, and it was especially his duty to see that its natural defensive features should have been improved to the utmost by every means known to field fortification. "Believing," says Porter, "my force too small to defend successfully this long line, I asked of General Barnard, who had selected and pointed out this position, to represent to the major general commanding the necessity of re-enforcement, and he was to send me felling axes for defensive purposes." But it was not till afterward that he learned that this message was not delivered, and a second call for axes brought them so late that they could not be helved in time to be made useful. "The barricades prepared by borrowing the axes of the artillery," he says, "insured desperate and prolonged resistance, and had the call for axes first asked for and the troops been delivered and filled, the fate of the day and the result of the campaign upon the prolonged contest between the two sections of our country may have been most materially changed." Whether the fact that the commanding general was reposing at the time of Barnard's arrival at headquarters prevented the reception and action upon Porter's message it is impossible to say, but at all events the failure to convey so vital a message is a sad commentary upon the competency of the headquarters staff in the transaction of urgent public business that involved the safety of the army.

Upon McClellan's return to his headquarters on the south side of the Chickahominy he found no

* Official War Records, vol. xi, part i, p. 116.

change in the situation to warrant holding Porter at Beaver Dam, and therefore sent him the order to withdraw to the selected position at Gaines's Mill; this order reached Porter after midnight, which necessitated the execution of this delicate operation in the face of a greatly superior force in the broad light of day. Fortunately the severe punishment inflicted by McCall's division upon A. P. Hill's the afternoon before caused the Confederates to be less enterprising than would otherwise have been the case. Thanks to the admirable manner in which Seymour's brigade covered the retreat and the strong opposition offered by the rear guards along the roads and at the bridge crossings, Porter was enabled to dispose his corps for a defensive battle in the new position before noon with an inconsiderable loss of men and supplies, and to save also the heavy siege guns that had been posted in the vicinity of Hogan's and Gaines's farms.

The accompanying map indicates the characteristic features of the ground upon which the battle of Gaines's Mill was fought. The valley of the creek that drained into Boatswain Swamp formed a natural ditch that covered its west and north front, while its eastern flank was somewhat protected by thick woods and the creek that flowed into Barker's Mill Pond. Its weakest point was very near the center of its front, due to the intrusion of a well-wooded valley by which the road from New Cold Harbor ascended to the plateau. Had time allowed attention to its defensive features, those which Nature had provided could have been, with little labor, immensely strengthened, and the timber which enabled the Confederates to form their lines for attack unseen could have been felled, and there is every reason to believe that the result of the battle would have proved disastrous to the Confederate attack.

Porter, believing that the enemy outnumbered him three to one, was forced to fight a purely defensive battle, and from the configuration of the ground his line presented a convex front toward the enemy, and although its extent was much too great for the num-

OLD COLD HARBOR
JACKSON
Gaines Mill
NEW COLD HARBOR
SYKES
Magee
N
MORELL
Watts
McCALL
LONGSTREET
Adams
To Barker's Mill Pond
BOATSWAIN SWAMP
CHICKAHOMINY RIVER
Woodbury's Bridge
BATTLE
GAINES MILL
Scale
0
1000 YDS.
Union
Confederate
Woodbury's & Alexander's Bridge

ber of his troops, he had reason to hope that his chief would not fail to send him re-enforcements as speedily as possible. According to the estimate of General A. S. Webb, Porter's strength amounted to seventeen thousand three hundred and thirty infantry, twenty-five hundred and thirty-four artillery, and six hundred and seventy-one cavalry for duty on that field, but from the character of the ground but little of the artillery and cavalry could be used to advantage. Morell's division, comprising Butterfield's, Martindale's, and Griffin's brigades, held the left; Sykes's division, comprising Warren's, Lovell's, and Buchanan's brigades, the right; and McCall's division of Reynolds's, Seymour's, and Meade's brigades was first placed in reserve, since it had fought the preceding day at Beaver Dam, but afterward its component parts were sent in to sustain different portions of the line as the exigencies of the battle demanded. The task of defending the position was intrusted to General Fitz-John Porter, an officer of distinguished merit, who possessed in the highest degree the confidence of his chief, and who clearly perceived the great importance of his task. He says: "I, however, determined to hold my position at least long enough to make the army secure. Though in a desperate situation, I was not without strong hope of some timely assistance from the main body of the army, with which I might repulse the attack and so cripple our opponents as to make the capture of Richmond by the main body of the army, under McClellan, the result of any sacrifice or suffering of my troops or of myself. I felt that the life or death of the army depended upon our conduct in the contest of that day, and that on the issue of that contest depended an early peace or a prolonged, devastating war—for the Union cause could never be yielded. Our brave and intelligent men of all grades and ranks fully realized this, and thousands of them freely offered up their lives that day to maintain the sacred cause which they had voluntarily taken up arms to defend to the last extremity."

General Lee, in execution of his plan to attack the

fragmentary portion of McClellan's army on the north bank of the Chickahominy and cut the line of communication with the supply depots at White House on the Pamunkey, sent forward four strong divisions against Porter; these were Longstreet's, A. P. Hill's, Jackson's, and D. H. Hill's, and in aggregate numbered very nearly sixty thousand men, leaving twenty-five thousand men in front of McClellan on the south side of the Chickahominy to make such vigorous demonstrations as would suffice to retain that portion of the Army of the Potomac within its own lines while he overwhelmed the single corps of Porter on the north bank. Longstreet and A. P. Hill, after crossing Beaver Dam Creek, followed the roads leading to Gaines's House and Mill respectively; while Jackson and D. H. Hill, moving from the Mechanicsville road upon Old Cold Harbor, had the longer route to travel to reach their designated position.

In this tactical disposition General Lee hoped that the appearance of Jackson and D. H. Hill at Cold Harbor would cause Porter to extend his defensive line to the right to cover the York River Railway, the main Union line of communication with the Pamunkey, and thus sufficiently weaken the Union line in front of Longstreet and A. P. Hill, who would then be sent forward to the attack. He placed the whole left wing of the Confederate army under the direct command of Jackson, and imparted his expectations to the latter in order that Jackson might be governed accordingly. Through some mistake of his guides Jackson's division was delayed in its advance to the field of battle, and D. H. Hill's division reached Cold Harbor in advance of Jackson, and shortly after noon some of his regiments were skirmishing with the Union right. In the meantime A. P. Hill had carried the bridge crossing at Gaines's Mill and deployed his six brigades in front of New Cold Harbor preparatory to making an assault upon Morell's division, the Union left, whose strong position on the left bank of Boatswain Creek had been developed by the severe skirmish

fire that lasted from noon till near half past two o'clock. After satisfying himself that Longstreet was in position on his right, A. P. Hill ordered his division forward in echelon of brigades. "Desperate and unavailing attempts," says he, "were made to force the enemy's position. Gregg and Branch fought with varying success, Gregg having before him the vaunted Zouaves and Sykes's regulars. Pender's brigade was suffering heavily but stubbornly held its own. Field and Archer met a withering storm of bullets but pressed on to within a short distance of the enemy's works, but the storm was too fierce for such a handful of men. They recoiled and were again pressed to the charge, but with no better success. These brave men had done all that any soldiers could do. Directing their men to lie down, the fight was continued and help awaited. From having been the attacking I now became the attacked, but stubbornly, gallantly was the ground held. My division was thus engaged full two hours before assistance was received. We failed to carry the enemy's lines, but we paved the way for the successful attacks afterward, and in which attacks it was necessary to employ the whole of our army that side the Chickahominy."

While A. P. Hill's attack was in progress Jackson had so disposed D. H. Hill's division and his own corps as to be able to gather the fruits of the expected Confederate victory, but it soon became evident from the sounds of battle that A. P. Hill was not making satisfactory progress, and Jackson was forced to deploy his command for attack. With D. H. Hill's division of five brigades upon the extreme Confederate left and Ewell's four brigades next in line, a strong assaulting line was formed in front of Sykes's position, which struggled for nearly two hours to gain a foothold within the Union lines, but without success. The four brigades of Jackson's own division were sent in to reenforce the Confederate line, according to the exigencies of the time, as they came upon the field of battle; Lawton to strengthen Ewell, Jones to aid Wilcox of

Longstreet's division, Fulkerson to the support of Whiting's division, and Winder, the last to arrive on the field, going into the fight under the direction of A. P. Hill. In the meantime General Lee had directed Longstreet to make a feint upon the extreme right in aid of A. P. Hill, but Longstreet soon perceived that it would be necessary to convert the feint into a strong attack to be of any avail in the present critical situation. Accordingly he sent in the four brigades of Pickett, Wilcox, Pryor, and Featherston, with part of that of R. H. Anderson's, holding the remainder of the latter and Kemper's brigade in reserve. By the time these combinations were perfected it was nearly dusk, and it was of the utmost importance to Lee that victory should be gained before the night should fall. To the final effort, therefore, the Confederate line moved forward with such impetus that it was not within the power of the Union line to resist, weakened as the troops were by their losses and exhaustion of their long and heroic struggle. Their line was first pierced by Whiting's division, which, assaulting in two lines with conspicuous bravery and daring, suffered a loss of over a thousand men while they were crossing the deadly zone of their approach in front of the Union center.

Porter's dispositions for his defensive battle were skillfully made, and his troops fought with great gallantry and persistency. He had every reason to expect that McClellan would send him ample re-enforcements, and early in the morning had been cheered by the appearance of a portion of Slocum's division crossing Duane's Bridge as if coming to his support. But these troops were recalled to their camps in the morning and were not ordered to Porter's support until after two o'clock in the afternoon, just about the time that A. P. Hill was forming for his attack, and they did not reach him until about four o'clock, when they were in time to complete the repulse of Hill. Porter was thus forced to put in his reserve of McCall's division at an early period of the battle, and when A. P. Hill moved

forward to the attack Meade was pushed forward to support Martindale and Griffin on the left center, Seymour to the right and rear of Sykes, and then to the left of the division to strengthen Warren, while Reynolds, who had been sent to the right to cover the road at Barker's Mill, was hastened to the right of Griffin. Thus every component part of Porter's corps was fully employed and every regiment fighting in its designated position until its ammunition was exhausted, and then, if temporarily relieved, returning again and again to the firing line. When Slocum's division arrived upon the battlefield the exigencies of the struggle were such that its several brigades had to be hurried to the distressed points of the line, and it could not be employed under the eye of its capable commander. Thus Newton's brigade, being in advance, was sent to the right of Griffin to drive back the enemy that had temporarily gained a foothold; Bartlett's was sent most opportunely to aid Sykes at McGee's house, and Taylor's was distributed by regiments in the vacant spaces of Morell's division as necessity demanded. From this time till darkness had fallen, save for a short interval after A. P. Hill's defeat, the fighting was continuous and severe. Muskets became heated and fouled to such a degree that when the crisis of the battle drew near rapid firing became impossible, and it is not surprising that at the last advance of the whole Confederate line the weakened and exhausted Union line should have been carried. But though defeated, Porter's troops were not demoralized nor panic-stricken. They fell back nearer to the bridges, still opposing a brave front to the enemy. Just at this time the two fine brigades of French and Meagher of Sumner's corps appeared upon the plateau, and the cheers announcing their arrival, together with the fast approaching darkness, caused the Confederates to suspend their advance and bring the battle to an end. To the magnificent service of the Union artillery much of the sturdy defense was undoubtedly due, and although twenty-two pieces were lost, no discredit is

attached to that gallant arm of the service on that day. When the reserve batteries on the left were endeavoring to check the rapid advance of Law's and Hood's brigades south of Watt's house, and no infantry supports were there to aid them, a desperate charge of two squadrons of the Fifth Regular Cavalry was ordered by General Cooke to cover their withdrawal, and although scarcely two fifths of these gallant troopers returned from their fateful mission, the delay was sufficient to save some of the guns from capture.

The loss in killed and wounded upon both sides conspicuously exhibits the fighting qualities of the American soldier; the total Union loss being sixty-eight hundred and thirty-seven, of which eight hundred and ninety-four were killed, thirty-one hundred and seven wounded, and twenty-eight hundred and thirty-six missing, the latter being due mainly to the capture of two entire regiments—the Fourth New Jersey and the Eleventh Pennsylvania—who, on the firing line, enveloped in the smoke of battle and growing darkness, were unaware of their hazardous position until they found themselves surrounded by the enemy and were obliged to surrender. The Confederate loss has never been specifically stated, but it is supposed, with reason, to exceed in killed and wounded the total loss of the Union troops; for, excluding Longstreet's and A. P. Hill's divisions, the loss was thirty-two hundred and eighty-four, and since A. P. Hill's division was severely punished in his two hours' contest in the early part of the afternoon, and Longstreet's division was engaged from half past four o'clock until dusk, this conclusion does not appear unwarranted.

While the battle of Gaines's Mill was in progress, Magruder, south of the Chickahominy, was so actively aggressive as completely to deceive McClellan and his corps commanders on that side as to the strength of the force he had under his command. It will be remembered that McClellan imagined that Lee had nearly twice the force which he actually had, and he was confirmed in this impression by the chief of his

secret service, Major Allan, who on the 26th of June reported that Lee would have one hundred and eighty thousand men, and probably more, after Jackson joined. The same authority also reported that there were fifty-two earthworks around Richmond, on thirty-six of which two hundred and five guns were mounted.

Reliance upon this egregiously erroneous estimate undoubtedly caused McClellan to justify to himself a most disproportionate division of his strength on the two sides of the Chickahominy, so that while Porter, at first, with nine brigades, comprising but thirty-seven regiments of infantry, afterward re-enforced with the twelve regiments of Slocum's three brigades, was fighting twenty-seven Confederate brigades, comprising one hundred and fifteen regiments, Magruder, with but forty-three regiments in his eleven brigades, was holding at least nineteen Union brigades, with over ninety regiments within their strong defensive lines, in such a state of apprehension that the corps commanders did not deem it safe to detach any of their troops to re-enforce Porter, even when late in the afternoon his position was reported critical. Language is scarcely strong enough to condemn in appropriate terms the inefficient administration of the service of information whereby so gross a miscalculation should have been evolved, and especially since the two armies, with the exception of Jackson's corps, had been within close contact for more than a month. Conceding, however, that McClellan was bound to make his dispositions conform to his information, such as it was, it is scarcely possible, even with this concession, to justify the necessity, obligation, or propriety of fighting the battle of Gaines's Mill. His strongest friends and warmest admirers—Porter, Franklin, and Smith—sustained it in the expectation that McClellan would attack Magruder with the bulk of his forces on the south side, while Porter was holding the position to which he had been assigned to the last extremity. And if in his own mind he had decided that there was no alternative but a retreat to the James, it was incumbent upon him to

withdraw Porter from Beaver Dam Creek in the darkness after his successful action of that day. His trains could have commenced their movements on the night of the 26th, and his dispositions for defending the crossings of the Chickahominy at the lower bridges were just as feasible in the one case as in the other. The uncertain element in the whole problem that makes any forecast of probabilities difficult is whether McClellan possessed sufficient tactical ability to handle an army of one hundred thousand men in the battles that Lee would force upon him during the retreat.

The completely distorted view of the condition of affairs and the state of McClellan's mind with respect to the authorities at Washington after the battle of Gaines's Mill is exhibited in the letter he sent to Mr. Stanton, and which he wrote at midnight after he had learned the particulars of his defeat. He says:

"I now know the full history of the day. On this side of the river (the right bank) we repulsed several strong attacks. On the left bank our men did all that men could do, all that soldiers could accomplish, but they were overwhelmed by vastly superior numbers, even after I brought my last reserves into action. The loss on both sides is terrible. I believe it will prove to be the most desperate battle of the war. The sad remnants of my men behave as men. Those battalions who fought most bravely and suffered most are still in the best order. My regulars were superb, and I count upon what are left to turn another battle in company with their gallant comrades of the volunteers. Had I twenty thousand, or even ten thousand, fresh troops to use to-morrow, I could take Richmond; but I have not a man in reserve, and shall be glad to cover my retreat and save the material and *personnel* of the army.

"If we have lost the day we have yet preserved our honor, and no one need blush for the Army of the Potomac. I have lost this battle because my force was too small.

"I again repeat that I am not responsible for this,

and I say it with the earnestness of a general who feels in his heart the loss of every brave man who has been needlessly sacrificed to-day. I still hope to retrieve our fortunes; but to do this the Government must view the matter in the same earnest light that I do. You must send me very large re-enforcements, and send them at once. I shall draw back to this side of the Chickahominy, and think I can withdraw all our material. Please understand that in this battle we have lost nothing but men, and those the best we have.

"In addition to what I have already said, I only wish to say to the President that I think he is wrong in regarding me as ungenerous when I said that my force was too weak. I merely intimated a truth which to-day has been too plainly proved. If, at this instant, I could dispose of ten thousand fresh men, I could gain a victory to-morrow. I know that a few thousand more men would have changed this battle from a defeat to a victory. As it is, the Government must not and can not hold me responsible for the result.

"I feel too earnestly to-night. I have seen too many dead and wounded comrades to feel otherwise than that the Government has not sustained this army. If you do not do so now the game is lost. If I save this army now, I tell you plainly that I owe no thanks to you or to any other persons in Washington. You have done your best to sacrifice this army." *

Just before inditing this intemperate letter he had called together the corps commanders and informed them of his plan of retreat and contemplated orders to carry it out. For a brief moment he had entertained the thought of concentrating his strength against Magruder in the endeavor to gain a compensating advantage, but the suggestion was rather an impulse arising from emotional influences than a judgment based upon rational considerations. The retreat having been decided upon, Keyes was directed to move

* Official War Records, vol. xi, part i, p. 61.

his corps across White Oak Swamp to cover the movement, and by dark, his corps, with the exception of Naglee's brigade left behind to guard the railroad and Bottom's Bridges, was in position covering the junction of the Long Bridge road with those leading from Richmond, the most vulnerable point of the line of retreat. The vast accumulation of supplies, munitions, camp equipage, baggage, etc., necessary for so great an army could not possibly be transported during the retreat. Neither was it possible to save the seriously wounded and sick that were under the care of the surgeons in the hospitals, and of these it was necessary to abandon about twenty-five hundred to the mercy of the enemy. Orders were therefore issued to the several commanders to load the wagons with food and ammunition and necessary baggage and to destroy the remainder. During all of the day and night of the 28th the long trains of reserve and siege artillery, the four thousand transportation wagons and ambulances, and the herd of twenty-five hundred beef cattle steadily moved along the single road across White Oak Swamp Bridge seeking the security of the new base upon the James River that was now their goal.

Porter's corps and McCall's division, having fought at Gaines's Mill, were ordered to follow Keyes, and both were across the Swamp by morning of the 29th. Slocum's division, designated by McClellan as a reserve, was ordered to Savage Station, where it arrived early on the 29th, and thence was directed to the cross-roads to relieve Keyes.

While these movements were in progress the defensive lines were held by Sumner's and Heintzelman's corps, and Smith's division of Franklin's corps so securely that Magruder could gain no information as to what was passing within the lines of the Army of the Potomac. In attempting to follow up Smith's withdrawal from his advanced position in front of Golding's on the morning of the 28th, two Georgia regiments suffered severely and Magruder gained no

information. In the meanwhile Lee was anxiously waiting to ascertain what McClellan was doing or intended doing. The former certainly expected that McClellan would attempt to recover his line of communication with the Pamunkey, and to provide against this eventuality he dispatched Early's division to the vicinity of the railroad and Bottom's Bridge, while Stuart's cavalry was sent to White House Landing. Lee kept the remainder of his army on the north bank of the Chickahominy awaiting developments and reliable information, but it was not until evening of the 28th that he felt satisfied that McClellan had definitely abandoned his base and was seeking a new one on the banks of the James.

To press McClellan's rear and strike his flank during the retreat were the obvious things to do, and for this purpose he directed Magruder to follow down the Williamsburg road, Huger to move by the Charles City road, while Longstreet and A. P. Hill, crossing the Chickahominy at New Bridge, should move by the Darbytown road in the endeavor to strike McClellan's flank at its junction with the Long Bridge road. Jackson and D. H. Hill were directed to cross by the Grapevine Bridge and unite with Magruder in following up the rear of McClellan's army, while Ewell was for the present to remain in the vicinity of Bottom's Bridge north of the Potomac, lest McClellan should endeavor to seek that avenue down the Peninsula. The precious twenty-four hours that McClellan gained by Lee's inaction were invaluable, since it enabled him to hold on to his intrenched lines till the morning of the 29th, and by that time his trains and impedimenta were well on their way to Haxall's Landing on the James. McClellan himself felt that the most pressing part of his duty pertained to the safety of his trains and the determination of a suitable defensive position for his army under the protection of the gunboats of the navy. In acting under this conviction he has been severely criticised by military writers, and not very successfully defended by his ardent admirers. As a matter

of fact, his headquarters during the whole of the retreat were unduly distant from the several fields of battle, and so much so, indeed, that so far as his personal or professional influence was concerned, it may be almost completely ignored in all tactical combinations. Thus he established his headquarters at Savage Station early on the 28th, where he remained till early the next morning, and then crossed the swamp. Speaking of the 29th, he says: "As the essential part of this day's operations was the passage of the trains across the swamp and their protection against attack from the direction of New Market and Richmond, as well as the immediate and secure establishment of our communications with the gunboats, I passed the day in examining the ground, directing the posting of troops, and securing the uninterrupted movement of the trains."

While he was engaged on this duty, which should properly have been intrusted to his staff officers, Magruder was attacking Sumner at Allen's farm, but without success, while Smith, on Sumner's right, was near Trent's, and Heintzelman, on his left, was moving down to his old intrenchments near Savage Station. No specific instructions had been issued by McClellan for the unity of these commands under a single head, which should have been done, as he himself was sufficiently far to the rear to be incapacitated for active direction. Later, Sumner was prevailed upon to withdraw to Savage Station for concentration, and there, about five o'clock, was again attacked, but although he commanded by virtue of seniority and understood that Heintzelman was in position on his left flank, the latter officer, under the supposition that the place was much too crowded with troops, moved off across the swamp by Brackett's Ford unknown to Sumner, who at a critical period of the battle was forced to recall a portion of Smith's division to prevent his being flanked in that part of the field where he supposed Heintzelman's corps was in position. In the possibility of Jackson's early appearance by the Grapevine Bridge

Sumner's position was hazardous, but that sturdy fighter was not disposed to retire from his position at Savage Station. Fortunately for him, Jackson was unduly delayed in repairing his bridge, and the whole of the Union rear guard crossed the swamp during the night and early the next morning, and the bridge was then destroyed.

The next day, at about noon, Longstreet and A. P. Hill were on the New Market road, within striking distance of the crossroads, the most important and most vulnerable point of McClellan's line of retreat, while Huger, on the Charles City road near Brackett's, was expected to open the attack on the Confederate left. Here again a condition of affairs had haphazardly arisen, due to the lack of unity of command and the long distance that separated the commanding officer of the army from the battlefield, and which came very near resulting in disaster.

A brief statement of the movements of the several divisions in arriving upon the battlefield of Glendale will suffice for a comprehension of the situation: First, Slocum's division of Franklin's corps, under the direct orders of McClellan, crossed the swamp to relieve Keyes and reached its designated position at 7 P. M. on the 29th, but early the next morning was moved out on the Charles City road about a mile from the junction. Here the road beyond was blocked, Brackett's Ford destroyed, and a detachment placed to defend its crossing. Next, Kearny's division of Heintzelman's corps crossed the swamp during the evening of the 29th, Berry's brigade at Fisher's Ford and Birney's and Robinson's at Brackett's Ford, the whole division encamping at about 10 P. M. in the position afterward occupied by Slocum, but the next morning was moved to the left to guard the country between the Charles City and the New Market roads, a front of about two and a half miles. McCall's division, that had fought so severely at Beaver Dam on the 26th and at Gaines's Mill on the 27th, remained at Trent's until 8 P. M. on the 28th, when it was ordered to the cross-

ing of the swamp, taking with it thirteen batteries of the reserve artillery. But so congested was the road that McCall did not succeed in crossing with his division until afternoon of the next day, when at 5 P. M. he was ordered to the Glendale crossroads to take position covering it from the approach of the enemy. This was effected by midnight, and by early morning his division was posted a short distance in front of the crossroads, mainly upon the left of the Long Bridge road and in communication with Kearny, who was upon his right. The other division of Heintzelman, under Hooker, had followed the main portion of Kearny's division and crossed at Brackett's Ford, and was finally moved to McCall's left and somewhat to his rear, leaving a gap of several hundred yards between the two commands on this flank. Finally Sedgwick's division of Sumner's corps, after crossing the swamp about daybreak on the 30th and getting a short rest, was marched to the crossroads, being placed to the rear of McCall's division, but the division had not been here long before Dana's and Gorman's brigades were ordered to return to support Franklin at White Oak Swamp Bridge, who at eleven o'clock was being attacked by Jackson in an endeavor to force a passage; Richardson's division of Sumner's corps and Smith's division of Franklin's and Naglee's brigade of Peck's division of Keyes's corps comprised the force under Franklin's command. On this day the remainder of the Army of the Potomac, namely, Keyes's corps, less Naglee's brigade and Porter's corps, were in the vicinity of Malvern Hill, some two miles to the left of the Glendale battlefield. It must have been evident to General McClellan that Lee would attack that day both at the White Oak Swamp Bridge and at the crossroads and that the crisis of the retreat had arrived, and yet he had withdrawn himself from the immediate vicinity of a battlefield where, had the consequences been averse, his army would have been lost. And still more astounding is the fact that he had not by explicit orders placed the four divisions of the army that had

been collected at the crossroads under a single commander with specific instructions for battle. The consequence of this was that the four division commanders there present were practically unaware of the particular situation of their neighboring commands, and they actually fought their divisions independently. It is true that two corps commanders, Sumner and Heintzelman, were there, but the former had but a brigade of his own corps when the battle opened, and Heintzelman's two divisions were separated by McCall's division, so that the unity of the command was broken. On the right at the bridge crossing, Franklin, who was charged with its defense, was in better circumstances in this respect.

With regard to the disposition of the Confederates, Longstreet and A. P. Hill, encouraged by General Lee's presence, were ready for attack at three o'clock in the afternoon, and were waiting to hear the sound of Huger's guns on the Charles City road before going into action. Holmes's division was moving down the River road, deploying in front of Porter at Malvern Hill, while Magruder, marching to Holmes's support and then countermarching in obedience to contradictory orders, was eliminated from all active participation that afternoon. Jackson with his own corps and D. H. Hill's division arrived in front of the destroyed bridge at White Oak Swamp at about noon, and Ewell's division was moving on the north side of the Chickahominy to follow after Jackson. General Lee was thus endeavoring to concentrate the bulk of his army, nearly seventy thousand men, at the Charles City crossroads, which, had he accomplished it, would have proved the destruction of the Union army. But fortunately for McClellan, Franklin was successful in preventing Jackson from crossing on the 30th, Huger was held in check by Slocum and Kearny, and Magruder was not available. The battle which ensued, known as that of Glendale, Charles City crossroads, Nelson's, or Frazier's Farm, was fought on the Confederate side by Longstreet's and A. P. Hill's divisions,

and on the Union side by McCall's division and a portion of Hooker's and Kearny's and Sedgwick's divisions.

McCall's division, which had suffered severely in the battles of Beaver Dam Creek and Gaines's Mill, and was further weakened by the exhaustion arising from loss of rest, did not number more than six thousand men, and it was upon this small body that Longstreet hurled the twelve brigades of his command, who were inspired by the presence of General Lee himself. McCall, expecting the attack, had placed Meade's brigade on his right, Seymour's on his left, and Reynolds's in reserve, the latter then commanded by Colonel Simmons; in front of his line he had six batteries, Thompson's and Randol's on the right of the road, Amsden's and Cooper's on the left of the road, and farther to the left two four-gun batteries of 20-pounder Parrotts, commanded by Diederichs and Knieriem of Morell's division. The ground in his front was open, offering a beautiful battle ground, with the exception that it was too extensive for the strength of his command.

Longstreet, hearing the sound of Slocum's and Huger's guns on the Charles City road and interpreting this as the indication of Huger's readiness to attack, hastened some of his artillery to the front and opened fire in response. Then at about 3 P. M. he sent forward Jenkins's brigade, and followed rapidly with the remainder of his division in repeated assaults upon McCall's line. After a vigorous resistance of two hours part of Seymour's left gave way and was forced back in disorder upon the right of Hooker, whose right brigade, however, held the line. Knieriem and Diederich's batteries were abandoned without much resistance on the part of the cannoneers, and Cooper's was captured after a heroic struggle to hold its position. On the right two Alabama regiments of Wilcox's brigade, in wedge formation and with their muskets at a trail, heroically breasting the close fire of canister from Randol's guns, carried the battery and drove off its

supports. This magnificent behavior of McCall's division could not, however, finally withstand the overwhelming preponderance of Longstreet's and Hill's superior force, and Sedgwick, with Hooker's right, were brought into action, while on the right of the Union line Kearny's left became hotly engaged near the close of day. The gallant resistance offered by McCall's division from 3 P. M. till dark thus prevented the Confederates from gaining their object of breaking the line of retreat of the Union army. The battle ended along about nine o'clock, while during its progress the slow-moving trains were making their way in safety to their resting place on the banks of the James.

The sturdy defense of that portion of the Union army at Glendale and the successful resistance that Franklin had opposed to Jackson's crossing at White Oak Swamp insured the safety of the reserve artillery and supply trains, the rear of which reached Malvern Hill at four o'clock in the afternoon of the 30th. It was about this time that Holmes's division appeared in front of Warren's small brigade on the River road near Turkey Creek Bridge and opened fire with its artillery. But the concentrated fire of about thirty pieces of artillery from the western crest of Malvern Hill, together with the demoralizing fire of the gunboats and the infantry of Warren's command, soon drove back Holmes's division, so that Lee gained nothing from this flanking force. When night fell no orders had been received by the several Union corps commanders, for McClellan was awaiting the return of his aids to inform himself of the results of the day's operations, of which at this time he was practically ignorant. Franklin, assuming that he had complied with his instructions to hold the bridge until nightfall, and that then he was authorized to withdraw, began his movement to the rear at ten o'clock after sending word to Sumner and Heintzelman of his purpose. In consequence of Franklin's retiring, both Sumner and Heintzelman were compelled to follow suit, since their

position was untenable as soon as Jackson could control the passage of the swamp, and thus it was that without orders from the commanding general the positions held during the day were most fortunately abandoned.

CHAPTER XIII.

MALVERN HILL. — HARRISON'S LANDING. — WITHDRAWAL OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC FROM THE PENINSULA. — POPE'S CAMPAIGN. — McCLELLAN'S RESTORATION TO COMMAND.

General Lee, though grievously disappointed at the failure of his combinations on the 30th, took immediate measures to follow McClellan early the next morning, the junction of the component portions of his army having been then effected at the crossroads. Jackson was directed to pursue by the Willis Church road; Huger to pass from his position on the Charles City road and move on Jackson's right; while Magruder, who had come up from the River road during the night to the battlefield of Glendale, was directed to move also on Jackson's right by the Quaker road; and Longstreet and A. P. Hill were to form the reserve of the Confederate army. General Lee, who was suffering from illness and excessive fatigue, that morning invited Longstreet to make reconnoissance with Magruder and Huger's columns to ascertain the feasibility of making aggressive battle upon the Union position, and Longstreet, joining Magruder, found him following the road running almost due south from the Long Bridge road, a few hundred yards east of Enroughty's House, which was known locally as the Quaker road. But Longstreet, believing him too far west from Jackson, and that the road was not the Quaker road as understood at headquarters, finally succeeded in having Magruder ordered to change his route after the latter had proceeded some distance. This caused some delay in getting Magruder into position, and Huger

was eventually interposed between D. H. Hill and Magruder. Longstreet himself soon arrived at a piece of elevated ground from which he had a good view of Porter's disposition at Malvern Hill, and could also see Jackson's troops, which were then filing into Poindexter's field. Believing that a hundred guns concentrated in front of Jackson, crossing their fire with a forty-gun battery established on the ground near his point of observation, would soon overwhelm the Union artillery and justify a frontal attack on Porter's lines, he so reported to General Lee. The latter adopted Longstreet's suggestion and directed his pioneer corps to cut the roads for the advance of the artillery, and Armistead's brigade, being then in the vicinity of the proposed battery of position, Lee issued the following order: "Batteries have been established to rake the enemy's line. If it is broken, as is probable, Armistead, who can witness the effect of the fire, has been ordered to charge with a yell. Do the same."

This proposed concentration of artillery upon the Confederate right and left was not effected, and there do not appear to have been explicit orders issued to bring it about, for, though the Confederate chief of artillery, General Pendleton, industriously sought for suitable sites for his reserve artillery, he makes no reference to the fact that he was acting under specific orders, and Jackson is likewise also silent with regard to the concentration of artillery. Armistead, however, was enterprising in bringing Grimes's, Pegram's, and Moorman's batteries up, but these were soon disabled, due to the efficient concentrated fire of Porter's batteries, and similar results obtained against Balthis's, Poague's, Carpenter's, and other batteries in front of Jackson's command in Poindexter's farm.

According to Longstreet, this failure to concentrate the Confederate artillery caused General Lee to abandon his adopted plan of battle, although he issued no orders specifically recalling it, under the impression that his officers had realized its failure and the abandonment of the plan, and he then sought, accom-

BATTLE FIELD
OF
MALVERN HILL
July 1st 1862
Scale
0 ½ 1
N
Willis Church
Willis Church Road
Long Bridge Road
Longstreet
Enroughty
A. P. Hill
Magruder
D.H.Hill
Jackson
Huger
Couch
Binford
Crew
West
Porter's Corps
Morell
Martindale
Butterfield
Sykes
Kearny
Heintzelman's Corps
Hooker
Sumner's Corps
Holmes
Western Run
River Road
Malvern Hill
B F Dew
Malvern House
McCall
Warren
Turkey Bridge
To Harrison Landing
JAMES RIVER
To Haxall

panied by Longstreet, a route by which the two reserve divisions of Longstreet and A. P. Hill might reach McClellan's right flank. After a hasty reconnoissance a feasible route was thought to have been found, and the troops of the reserve were actually on the march when the battle was opened by the troops in front.

Some explanation such as this given by Longstreet seems to be necessary to account for Lee's extraordinary order, and the lack of his usual directive influence in the conduct of battle which was so markedly absent in that of Malvern Hill.

Malvern Hill, the theater of the final battle of the Seven Days' contest, was admirably adapted for a defensive battle, and McClellan, quickly perceiving the advantages that it offered, gave directions for posting the troops as they arrived upon the ground, and specially directed General Humphreys to take charge of this duty. Early on the morning of the 1st he rode the circuit of the position, approved the disposition that Porter and Couch had made of their troops, and then returned to his headquarters at Haxall's Landing, but shortly afterward went on board of the gunboat Galena to select, with Commodore Rodgers, the final emplacements for the army and its depots. No argument has ever been considered strong enough to justify this separation of General McClellan from his army, then manifestly on the eve of battle. Not only the security but the salvation of the army was in jeopardy, and at this juncture it would seem that these must necessarily depend upon the best generalship that it was possible for him to exercise on that day. All the component parts of Lee's army were certain to be united before noon, and it could hardly be doubted that they would be sent forward to attack under the skillful direction of Lee himself. The continued presence of General McClellan with his troops, seeing to their best tactical disposition and giving them the inspiration of his undoubted personal magnetism, was a duty of the first importance, in comparison with which everything else was relatively of no military

value whatever; for had his army been defeated at Malvern Hill, not even a fragmentary portion would have reached Harrison's Landing; and because it was successful, he being absent, every explanation of this absence put forward by his defenders must ever be in the nature of an unsatisfactory apology.

McClellan having, however, decided upon a strictly defensive battle, confided its management to General Fitz-John Porter, whose troops comprised Griffin's, Martindale's, and Butterfield's brigades, Morell's division of his own corps, Palmer's, Abercrombie's, and Howe's brigades of Couch's division, Fourth Corps, forming the front of the defense; Buchanan's and Lovell's regular brigades of Sykes's division covering the left flank, and McCall's division, under Seymour, placed in front of the Malvern House as a reserve; besides these, about a hundred guns of the artillery reserve and the siege artillery, under the efficient direction of Colonel Hunt, were massed in suitable emplacements in rear of the main defensive line to concentrate their fire upon such artillery positions as the enemy might assume, as well as to break up their infantry formations as they emerged from the screen of woods; the divisional light batteries were also judiciously distributed along the front and left flank. While awaiting the attack, Porter, Couch, and the subordinate commanders took advantage of the inequalities of the ground to shelter their troops as much as possible during the preliminary artillery combat that preceded the enemy's advance in line.

Heintzelman's and Sumner's corps, arriving during the night, were placed to the right and rear of Couch, and Franklin's corps, coming into position on the morning of the 1st, was placed to the right of Sumner. McCall's weakened division, under Seymour, was placed in reserve near the Malvern House, and Keyes, with Peck's division of his corps, joining Smith's right, continued the Union line to the right, covering Haxall on the James. From the disposition of the Union forces and the configuration of the ground it will be seen that

the brunt of the Confederate attack would necessarily fall upon Porter and Couch, and it was all-important that this line should be held to the last extremity for the salvation of the Union army.

Upon the Confederate side there does not appear to have been that co-operation in the deployment of the several divisions designated for the attack so necessary for success, so that Armistead's and Wright's brigades of Huger's division, advancing tentatively about three o'clock against Porter's left, suffered severely, as did also G. B. Anderson's brigade attacking Palmer on Couch's left. D. H. Hill, recognizing the strength of the Union position after a careful examination of it with his brigade commanders, reported his conclusions to Jackson and asked for orders; he was told to obey those already issued. About five o'clock, hearing the sound of infantry firing and shouting on his right, and imagining that this was the indicated signal from Armistead, he directed his brigade commanders to advance. Through the screen of woods and over the difficult ground his five brigades moved up the slopes of Malvern Hill, assailed by the storm of shot, shell, and canister from the artillery, and the sheets of musketry fire from Porter's line. They had near eight hundred yards to go, and no troops in line could breast that plane of destruction, so that when the brigade reserves had been called upon to steady the weakened lines before they had passed over half the distance and no other supports were at hand to add their aggressive impulse, the line wavered, faltered, and then fell back suffering a bloody and disastrous repulse. Shortly after this, Magruder, on the extreme left, pushed forward the nine brigades of his own and Huger's commands with a like result, and although the contest was stubbornly maintained until nearly nine o'clock, not only were the Confederates badly defeated, but many of the troops were almost completely demoralized by the terrible punishment they had received. At no time were the Union lines in danger, although at some points the magnificent courage and intrepidity

of the Confederate troops had carried them to within a short distance of the Union line, but the severity of the fire to which they were then exposed could not be withstood by troops advancing in line without the strongest supports. From time to time the Union regiments and batteries that had expended their ammunition were withdrawn from their positions in line to be replaced by others, and it was only on the left, in front of the Crew House, where Wright's, Mahone's, and Armistead's Confederate brigades had succeeded, though after great losses, in reaching a close vicinity of the Union lines, that some temporary confusion resulted. The crisis of the battle occurred about six o'clock, when Hill's five brigades on the Confederate left were advancing over the open field toward the crest held by the Union lines, and at about the time that Magruder was making his attempt on the right with nine brigades of his own and Huger's divisions.

The demoralization of the Confederate troops after the unsuccessful attempt, as reported by the brigade commanders, was excessive, and this condition continued during the night. Both Porter and Hunt, who had accompanied Meagher's brigade to the front near the close of day, were so satisfied of the success that had been won by the Union army that they hoped that McClellan would hold his ground, and were indeed on their way to make this recommendation when orders were received to continue the retreat during the night.

Upon the representations of Commodore Rodgers that the army could not with safety nor certainty be supplied by the transports above City Point, McClellan decided, upon personal inspection, to locate the army at Harrison's Landing, and after the battle of Malvern Hill orders were issued to continue the retreat to that point. By daybreak on the 2d the army was well on its way, and although the roads became difficult owing to a heavy rain that began in the morning and continued all day, by nightfall the greater portion of the army and its trains had reached the end of their journey. Within the next few days the lines of the army

were securely located and constructed, and Lee did not feel warranted in making another attack on an intrenched position.

During the retreat the Army of the Potomac had been subjected to a tremendous test as an organized body, and had responded to it magnificently, justifying in the highest degree its splendid discipline and powers of endurance. Following this period of intense nervous excitement and physical exhaustion many of the troops succumbed and the sick list increased greatly, but the overworked surgeons, aided with abundant rations, vegetables, and medicine, soon brought it down to normal proportions. McClellan's anxiety during this period was also excessive, but he was forced to conceal every sign of the fear that continually haunted him that his army was in danger of capture or destruction. He therefore felt highly elated when he saw the army safe within the lines, and correspondingly embittered that no official recognition had been extended to its gallant performances and heroic endurance by the authorities at Washington. But with regard to the Administration it must be said that the tenor and tone of McClellan's dispatches during this period, and the absence of reliable information while the army was in transit, gave rise to the gravest apprehension as to its safety, and as these had some considerable influence upon the decision afterward arrived at in regard to the disposition of the army, they will be briefly quoted.

To Secretary Stanton, June 30th, 7 P. M., he says: "Another day of desperate fighting. We are hard pressed by superior numbers. I fear I shall be forced to abandon my material to save my men under cover of the gunboats. You must send us very large reenforcements by way of Fort Monroe, and they must come very promptly. My army has behaved superbly, and have done all that men could do. If none of us escape, we shall at least have done honor to the country. I shall do my best to save the army. Send more gunboats." And in a similar dispatch to the

adjutant general he adds: "If it is the intention of the Government to re-enforce me largely, it should be done promptly and in mass. I need fifty thousand more men, and with them I will retrieve our fortunes. More would be well, but that number sent at once will, I think, enable me to resume the offensive. I can not too strongly urge the necessity of prompt action in this matter. Even a few thousand fresh men within the next twenty-four or forty-eight hours will do much toward relieving and encouraging this wearied army, which has been engaged in constant combat for the last five or six days." And to the same official, July 1st: "My whole army is here (Haxall's) with all its guns and material. The battle of yesterday was very severe, but the enemy was repulsed and severely punished. After dark the troops retired to this position. My men are completely exhausted, and I dread the result if we are attacked to-day by fresh troops. If possible I shall retire to-night to Harrison's Bar, where the gunboats can render more aid in covering our position. Permit me to urge that not an hour should be lost in sending me fresh troops. More gunboats are much needed. I hope that the enemy was so severely handled yesterday as to render him careful in his movements to-day. I now pray for time. My men have proved themselves the equals of any troops in the world, but they are worn out. Our losses have been very great. I doubt whether more severe battles have ever been fought. We have failed to win only because overpowered by superior numbers." In addition to these, the rather startling statement, found in his dispatch of July 3d, should be noted: "It is, of course, impossible to estimate as yet our losses, but I doubt whether there are to-day more than fifty thousand men with their colors. To accomplish the great task of capturing Richmond and putting an end to this rebellion, re-enforcements should be sent to me rather much over than much less than one hundred thousand men. I beg that you will be fully impressed by the magnitude of the crisis in which we are placed.

We require action on a gigantic scale—one commensurate with the views I expressed in a memorandum to the President submitted early last August, when first ordered to command the Army of the Potomac. The safety of the country and the preservation of its honor demand the utmost energy and intelligence."

These dolorous dispatches, while they made the President's burden harder to bear, did not cloud his reason nor warp his judgment. He replied, July 2d: "Your dispatch of Tuesday morning induces me to hope that your army is having some rest. In this hope allow me to reason with you a moment. When you ask for fifty thousand men to be promptly sent you, you surely labor under some gross mistake of fact. Recently you sent papers showing your disposal of forces made last spring for the defense of Washington and advising a return to that plan. I find it included in and about Washington seventy-five thousand men. Now, please be assured I have not men enough to fill that very plan by fifteen thousand. All of Frémont's in the Valley, all of Banks's, all of McDowell not with you, and all in Washington, taken together, do not exceed, if they reach, sixty thousand. With Wool and Dix added to those mentioned, I have not, outside of your army, seventy-five thousand men east of the mountains. Thus the idea of sending you fifty thousand, or any other considerable force promptly, is simply absurd. If, in your frequent mention of responsibility, you have the impression that I blame you for not doing more than you can, please be relieved of such impression. I only beg that in like manner you will not ask impossibilities of me. If you think you are not strong enough to take Richmond just now, I do not ask you to try just now. Save the army, material and *personnel*, and I will strengthen it for the offensive again as fast as I can. The governors of eighteen States offer me a new levy of three hundred thousand, which I accept."

Orders were sent, July 3d, to General Burnside to bring up all of his available infantry from Newbern,

N. C., and to General Hunter at Hilton Head, S. C., to send ten thousand of his infantry to Fort Monroe for the purpose of re-enforcing the Army of the Potomac. But previous to this the President had asked General Halleck to send twenty-five thousand men of his army, provided it could be done without endangering the Chattanooga expedition then about to be undertaken, but this latter order was finally countermanded upon Halleck's representations. To satisfy himself of the condition of affairs the President determined to visit the army at Harrison's Landing before deciding upon a course of action. He arrived July 8th, and conferred freely with General McClellan and his principal officers, inspected the army, and made such personal observations as were possible in his stay of less than twenty-four hours. While he was there General McClellan handed him a letter containing the views that he had requested permission, on the 20th of June, to submit to the President. The letter is as follows:

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,
CAMP NEAR HARRISON'S LANDING, VA., *July* 7, 1862.

MR. PRESIDENT: You have been fully informed that the rebel army is in our front, with the purpose of overwhelming us by attacking our positions or reducing us by blocking our river communications. I can not but regard our condition as critical, and I earnestly desire, in view of possible contingencies, to lay before your Excellency, for your private consideration, my general views concerning the existing state of the rebellion, although they do not strictly relate to the situation of this army, or strictly come within the scope of my official duties. These views amount to convictions, and are deeply impressed upon my mind and heart. Our cause must never be abandoned; it is the cause of free institutions and self-government. The Constitution and the Union must be preserved, whatever may be the cost in time, treasure, and blood. If secession is successful other dissolutions are clearly to be seen in the future. Let neither military disaster, political faction, nor foreign war shake your settled purpose to enforce the equal operation of the laws of the United States upon the people of every State.

The time has come when the Government must determine upon a civil and military policy covering the whole ground of our national trouble. The responsibility of determining, declaring, and supporting such civil and military

policy, and of directing the whole course of national affairs in regard to the rebellion must now be assumed and exercised by you, or our cause will be lost. The Constitution gives you power sufficient even for the present terrible exigency.

This rebellion has assumed the character of a war; as such it should be regarded; and it should be conducted upon the highest principles known to Christian civilization. It should not be a war looking to the subjugation of the people of any State in any event. It should not be at all a war upon population, but against armed forces and political organizations. Neither confiscation of property, political executions of persons, territorial organizations of States, or forcible abolition of slavery should be contemplated for a moment. In prosecuting the war, all private property and unarmed persons should be strictly protected, subject only to the necessity of military operations. All private property taken for military use should be paid or receipted for; pillage and waste should be treated as high crimes; all unnecessary trespass sternly prohibited, and offensive demeanor by the military toward citizens promptly rebuked. Military arrests should not be tolerated, except in places where active hostilities exist, and oaths not required by enactments constitutionally made should be neither demanded nor received. Military government should be confined to the preservation of public order and the protection of political rights. Military power should not be allowed to interfere with the relations of servitude, either by supporting or impairing the authority of the master, except for repressing disorder, as in other cases. Slaves contraband under the act of Congress, seeking military protection, should receive it. The right of the Government to appropriate permanently to its own service claims to slave labor should be asserted, and the right of the owner to compensation therefor should be recognized.

This principle might be extended, upon grounds of military necessity and security, to all the slaves of a particular State, thus working manumission in such State; and in Missouri, perhaps in Western Virginia also, and possibly even in Maryland, the expediency of such a measure is only a question of time.

A system of policy thus constitutional, and pervaded by the influences of Christianity and freedom, would receive the support of almost all truly loyal men, would deeply impress the rebel masses and all foreign nations, and it might be humbly hoped that it would commend itself to the favor of the Almighty.

Unless the principles governing the future conduct of our struggle shall be made known and approved, the effort to obtain requisite forces will be almost hopeless. A declaration of radical views, especially upon slavery, will rapidly disintegrate our present armies.

The policy of the Government must be supported by concentrations of military power. The national forces should not be dispersed in expeditions, posts of occupation, and numerous armies, but should be mainly collected into masses and brought to bear upon the armies of the Confederate States. Those armies thoroughly defeated, the political structure which they support would soon cease to exist.

In carrying out any system of policy which you may form, you will require a commander in chief of the army; one who possesses your confidence, understands your views, and who is competent to execute your orders by directing the military forces of the nation to the accomplishment of the objects by you proposed. I do not ask that place for myself. I am willing to serve you in such position as you may assign me, and I will do so as faithfully as ever subordinate served superior.

I may be on the brink of eternity, and as I hope forgiveness from my Maker, I have written this letter with sincerity toward you and from love for my country.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

G. B. McCLELLAN, *Major General Commanding.*

His Excellency A. LINCOLN, *President.**

The short period that had elapsed since the inception of war had witnessed many remarkable and surprising changes in public opinion, for the people had become accustomed to the thought that, after all, slavery was the single exciting cause of the rebellion, and to the belief that until that cause was removed success was unattainable. To strengthen the Union side and weaken the Confederate, emancipation was advocated as a prime military necessity, and both the strength and persistency of such advocates were continually increasing and bringing the strongest influences to bear upon the President to take radical action. The opposition was formed of heterogeneous elements. It comprised all those who were opposed to the war and who sought to place every obstruction in the way of its prosecution, and of those men of conservative minds who believed that the purpose of the war was to restore the Union as it was. McClellan, by his previous political predilections and his conservative cast of

* Official War Records, vol. xi, part i, p. 73.

mind, belonged naturally to the latter class, and hoping for a speedy successful termination of the war, he was opposed to every measure that would leave a sting of bitterness in the hearts of those who would soon again become citizens of the republic. He prided himself upon conducting war in a gentlemanly way, and felt outraged that orders such as those General Pope had issued should receive the implied sanction of the Administration.

It must be confessed that McClellan touched upon questions in this letter that were beyond his prerogative as a commander of an army officially to discuss. He crossed the boundaries within which both the President and Congress had specific jurisdiction, and hence his letter has been almost universally condemned. It was considered by many to have a political purpose in view, intended to pave the way for his selection as the standard bearer of the political party that was then crystallizing in opposition to the Administration. But this ascribes to him an ignoble purpose that is entirely out of harmony with the whole of his life and every trait of his character. It is more in keeping with these to accept his earnest statement that in submitting it he was actuated solely by sincerity and patriotism. With perfect confidence in his own military talents and political sagacity, he felt entirely competent to teach Mr. Lincoln something, whom, as President, he regarded as his official superior, but otherwise as his intellectual inferior. Seward, Chase, and many others less prominent, had committed the same error and learned to profit by it; but it was not the good fortune of McClellan, while in active service, to have this beam removed from his intellectual organs of vision. The President, after quietly reading the letter, refrained from making any comments upon its contents, merely thanking him as he placed it in his pocket.

Shortly after the close of the Valley campaign the President determined to combine the armies of McDowell, Frémont, and Banks, and on the 26th of June

Major-General John Pope, who had gained some reputation as a successful general in the West, was assigned to the command of the consolidated forces which were designated the Army of Virginia. General Pope was directed "to conduct the operations of his army in such a manner as to cover Washington, speedily attack and overcome the rebel forces under Jackson and Ewell, threaten the enemy in the direction of Charlottesville, and render the most effective aid to relieve General McClellan and capture Richmond." But at this time, though unknown to the authorities at Washington, Jackson and Ewell had joined Lee, and the series of battles known as the Seven Days' had been inaugurated, and long before Pope could gather the scattered fragments of his command together the Army of the Potomac had reached its resting place at Harrison's Landing on the James.

According to his own statement, General Pope was very much averse to accepting his advancement for various reasons, and sought to have his assignment countermanded, but without success. His task was an exceedingly difficult one. He was junior in rank to all the officers named above, the troops had passed through a hard campaign and needed recuperation, reorganization, and supplies, and before becoming capable of acting efficiently as an organized body in a contest with Lee's veterans they needed assimilation and comradeship. Besides, there were deficiencies in his own manner and temperament that militated against that necessary hearty co-operation on the part of his subordinate officers that could only be overlooked by the exhibition of such qualities of leadership on the field of battle as were peculiarly his own. He was also unfortunate in being kept away from his army, while awaiting in Washington the arrival of General Halleck, acting as the military adviser of the President in this interim. Here he was often very imprudent in speech, criticising in strong language the plans and operations of General McClellan, and thus ranging himself on the side of the latter's opponents, so much so,

indeed, that his own usefulness was thereby seriously impaired. Notwithstanding this, however, when Pope heard of the critical situation of the Army of the Potomac, he made known to McClellan, in a frank and manly letter, written July 4th, the exact condition of his own army, and at the same time expressed his earnest wish to co-operate with him to the fullest extent in his power. At the time of writing, Pope's command consisted of twenty-three thousand men of all arms of Frémont's and Banks's forces, then much demoralized, broken down, and unfit for immediate active service; McDowell's two divisions, one at Manassas and the other at Fredericksburg, aggregating nineteen thousand effective men, which was the only reliable portion of his army; and Sturgis's force of seventeen thousand in and about Washington, mostly raw recruits and the broken fragments of regiments, in no condition for other service than the defense of Washington. It was evident from this presentation that McClellan could hope for no re-enforcements from Pope's army.

When Mr. Lincoln returned to Washington it was a matter of supreme importance to decide what was best to be done with the Army of the Potomac. Franklin, Keyes, Newton, and Barnard had strongly recommended that it should be withdrawn, while McClellan strongly advised that re-enforcements should be sent to enable it to operate against Richmond from its present base. Secretaries Stanton and Chase had lost confidence in McClellan's ability, and there were undoubtedly many others in Washington of sufficient standing and influence to join with them in deterring the President from acceding to the desire of McClellan. Besides these influences it was very evident that the President was not favorably impressed with the reliability of McClellan's estimates of the actual effective strength of his own army or of the re-enforcements that would suffice to enable him to move actively and speedily against Richmond. In his dilemma he determined to send for Halleck, make him general in chief, and thus endeavor to get a solution of the difficulty

by a military man of established reputation. Halleck was appointed July 11th, but did not reach Washington until the 22d, and was immediately sent to Harrison's Landing to decide upon the possibility of McClellan's assuming the offensive, or, if that were found to be impracticable, to make provision for the removal of the Army of the Potomac. He was authorized to promise re-enforcements of twenty thousand men, being the troops of Burnside and Hunter, then under orders to assemble at Fort Monroe.

Both Halleck and McClellan were well instructed theorists in the art of war, but neither possessed a bold and aggressive disposition. Within three months their positions with respect to each other had been reversed by the orders of the President. Halleck, for many reasons, undoubtedly desired to accede to McClellan's wish, but his information was explicit as to the number of re-enforcements that the War Department could furnish, and beyond these he could not promise a single man. He pointed out to McClellan the weak spot of the latter's contention, viz., that if, as he believed, Lee had two hundred thousand men, an addition of twenty thousand to McClellan's army, giving him only one hundred and ten thousand, could not possibly justify any expectation of the latter's success, since he had failed with the same proportional numbers to succeed with the advantage of nearer position. Besides, Lee now occupied the interior position between Pope and McClellan which gave him a decided military advantage. On the other hand, McClellan believed that the withdrawal of the army from its position on the James would seriously affect its morale, and would entail a surrender of all that it gained by the sacrifices it had made. He thought a movement upon the south bank of the James toward Petersburg would force Lee to attack him in a position favorable to the Union arms, and at all events he would, by the control of the river, be free to choose his line of operations, and, finally, he regarded his position and present line of operations as the true defense of Washington. Upon being re-

quested to state what re-enforcements he would require to attack Richmond, he replied that with thirty thousand he believed he would have a good chance of success; but Halleck again told him that he was authorized to promise him only twenty thousand, and advised him to consult with his officers, consider the matter over night, and report the result of his conclusions the next day. The following morning McClellan told Halleck that though he thought the probabilities were not in his favor, he was willing to try it with the additional twenty thousand. Halleck had told him that if he did not think he could succeed, it was the intention of the Administration to unite his army with that of Pope, and also gave him to understand that in that event the command of the combined forces would be given to McClellan.

A careful study of Halleck's report of his interview with McClellan shows that he did not come away with any satisfactory conclusion in his mind that McClellan would meet the requirements of the situation, and therefore it is not improper to infer that he was ready to add his influence to those who believed that the army ought to be withdrawn from the James. Accordingly, on the 30th of July McClellan was advised by Halleck to send away his sick with all dispatch, "in order to enable you to move in any direction as quickly as possible," informing him at the same time that deserters were reporting to Pope that the enemy was moving south of the James and that their numbers in Richmond were very small, and suggesting that he be pressed in that direction to ascertain the facts of the case. McClellan inferred from this that he was expected to undertake an offensive movement, and was further strengthened in this view by a dispatch of the next day informing him that Pope had telegraphed that "the enemy is reported to be evacuating Richmond and falling back on Danville and Lynchburg."

With this idea in mind he advanced Hooker to Malvern Hill, which he expected to occupy during the

night of August 2d, but which, owing to the incompetency of guides, was not effected until the 5th. But on the morning of the 4th he had received Halleck's dispatch of the 3d, saying: "I have waited most anxiously to learn the result of your forced reconnoissance toward Richmond, and also whether all your sick have been sent away, and I can get no answer to my telegram. It is determined to withdraw your army from the Peninsula to Aquia Creek. You will take immediate measures to effect this, covering the movement the best you can. Its real object and withdrawal should be concealed even from your own officers."

McClellan proceeded to obey this order with all possible dispatch, but in the hope of having it countermanded he sent the following telegram: "Your telegram of last evening is received. I must confess that it has caused me the greatest pain I ever experienced, for I am convinced that the order to withdraw this army to Aquia Creek will prove disastrous to our cause. I fear it will be a fatal blow. Several days are necessary to complete the preparations for so important a movement as this; and while they are in progress I beg that careful consideration may be given to my statements.

"This army is now in excellent discipline and condition. We hold a *débouché* on both banks of the James River, so that we are free to act in any direction, and, with the assistance of the gunboats, I consider our communications as now secure. We are twenty-five miles from Richmond, and are not likely to meet the enemy in force sufficient to fight a battle until we have marched fifteen to eighteen miles, which brings us practically within ten miles of Richmond. Our longest line of land transportation would be from this point twenty-five miles, but with the aid of the gunboats we can supply the army by water during its advance certainly to within twelve miles of Richmond. At Aquia Creek we would be seventy-five miles from Richmond, with land transportation all the way.

"From here to Fort Monroe is a march of about

seventy miles; for I regard it as impracticable to withdraw this army and its material except by land. The result of the movement would thus be a march of one hundred and forty-five miles to reach a point now only twenty-five miles distant, and to deprive ourselves entirely of the powerful aid of the gunboats and water transportation. Add to this the certain demoralization of this army which would ensue, the terribly depressing effect upon the people of the North, and the strong probability that it would influence foreign powers to recognize our adversaries, and these appear to me sufficient reasons to make it my imperative duty to urge, in the strongest terms afforded by our language, that this order may be rescinded, and that, far from recalling this army, it may be promptly re-enforced to enable it to resume the offensive.

"It may be said that there are no re-enforcements available. I point to Burnside's force, to that of Pope —not necessary to maintain a strict defensive in front of Washington and Harper's Ferry—to those portions of the Army of the West not required for a strict defensive there. Here, directly in front of this army, is the heart of the rebellion; it is here that all of our resources should be collected to strike the blow which will determine the fate of the nation. All points of secondary importance elsewhere should be abandoned and every available man brought here; a decided victory here, and the military strength of the rebellion is crushed, it matters not what partial reverses we may meet with elsewhere. Here is the true defense of Washington; it is here on the banks of the James that the fate of the Union should be decided.

"Clear in my convictions of right, strong in the consciousness that I have ever been, and still am, actuated solely by the love of my country, knowing that no ambitious or selfish motives have influenced me from the commencement of this war, I do now what I never did in my life before: I entreat that this order may be rescinded. If my counsel does not prevail, I will with a sad heart obey your orders to the utmost of my

power, directing to the movement, which I clearly foresee will be one of the utmost delicacy and difficulty, whatever skill I may possess. Whatever the result may be—and may God grant that I am mistaken in my forebodings—I shall at least have the internal satisfaction that I have written and spoken frankly, and have sought to do the best in my power to avert disaster from my country."*

Halleck answered this August 6th, and since his answer presents very clearly the reasons that brought about the transfer, it is here quoted: "General: Your telegram of yesterday was received this morning, and I immediately telegraphed you a brief reply, promising to write you more fully by mail. You, general, certainly could not have been more pained at receiving my order than I was at the necessity of issuing it. I was advised by high officers, in whose judgment I had great confidence, to make the order immediately on my arrival here, but I determined not to do so until I could learn your wishes from a personal interview; and even after that interview I tried every means in my power to avoid withdrawing your army, and delayed my decision as long as I dared to delay it. I assure you, general, it was not a hasty and inconsiderate act, but one that caused me more anxious thoughts than any other of my life; but after full and mature consideration of all the pros and cons, I was reluctantly forced to the conclusion that the order must be issued. There was to my mind no alternative.

"Allow me to allude to a few of the facts in the case. You and your officers at one interview estimated the enemy's forces in and around Richmond at two hundred thousand men. Since then you and others report that they have received and are receiving large re-enforcements from the South. General Pope's army, covering Washington, is only about forty thousand. Your effective force is only about ninety thousand. You are thirty miles from Richmond, and General

* Official War Records, vol. xi, part i, p. 81.

Pope eighty or ninety, with the enemy directly between you, ready to fall with his superior numbers upon one or the other, as he may elect. Neither can re-enforce the other in case of such an attack.

"If General Pope's army be diminished to re-enforce you, Washington, Maryland, and Pennsylvania would be left uncovered and exposed. If your force be reduced to strengthen Pope, you would be too weak to even hold the position you now occupy should the enemy turn round and attack you in full force. In other words, the old Army of the Potomac is split into two parts, with the entire force of the enemy directly between them. They can not be united by land without exposing both to destruction, and yet they must be united. To send Pope's forces by water to the Peninsula is, under present circumstances, a military impossibility. The only alternative is to send the forces on the Peninsula to some point by water, say Fredericksburg, where the two armies can be united.

"Let me now allude to some of the objections which you have urged. You say that the withdrawal from the present position will cause the certain demoralization of the army, 'which is now in excellent discipline and condition.' I can not understand why a simple change of position to a new and by no means distant base will demoralize an army in excellent discipline, unless the officers themselves assist in that demoralization, which I am satisfied they will not. Your change of front from your extreme right at Hanover Court House to your present position was over thirty miles, but I have not heard that it demoralized your troops, notwithstanding the severe losses they sustained in effecting it. A new base on the Rappahannock at Fredericksburg brings you within about sixty miles of Richmond, and secures a re-enforcement of forty thousand or fifty thousand fresh and disciplined troops. The change, with such advantages, will, I think, if properly represented to your army, encourage rather than demoralize your troops. Moreover, you yourself suggested that a junction might be effected at

Yorktown, but that a flank march across the isthmus would be more hazardous than to retire to Fort Monroe. You will remember that Yorktown is two or three miles farther than Fredericksburg is. Besides, the latter is between Richmond and Washington, and covers Washington from any attack of the enemy. The political effect of the withdrawal may at first be unfavorable; but I think the public are beginning to understand its necessity, and that they will have much more confidence in a united army than in its separated fragments.

"But you will reply, Why not re-enforce me here, so that I can strike Richmond from my present position? To do this you said at our interview that you required thirty thousand additional troops. I told you that it was impossible to give you so many. You finally thought that you would have 'some chance' of success with twenty thousand. But you afterward telegraphed me that you would require thirty-five thousand, as the enemy was being largely re-enforced. If your estimate of the enemy's strength was correct, your requisition was perfectly reasonable, but it was utterly impossible to fill it until new troops could be enlisted and organized, which would require several weeks. To keep your army in its present position until it could be so re-enforced would almost destroy it in that climate. The months of August and September are almost fatal to whites who live on that part of the James River, and even after you received the re-enforcements asked for, you admitted that you must reduce Fort Darling and the river batteries before you could advance on Richmond. It is by no means certain that the reduction of these fortifications would not require considerable time, perhaps as much as those at Yorktown. This delay might not only be fatal to the health of your army, but in the meantime General Pope's force would be exposed to the heavy blows of the enemy without the slightest hope of assistance from you.

"In regard to the demoralizing effect of a with-

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drawal from the Peninsula to the Rappahannock, I must remark that a large number of your highest officers—indeed, a majority of those whose opinions have been reported to me—are decidedly in favor of the movement. Even several of those who originally advocated the line of the Peninsula now advise its abandonment. I have not inquired, and do not wish to know, by whose advice or for what reasons the Army of the Potomac was separated into two parts, with the enemy between them. I must take things as I find them. I find the forces divided and I wish to unite them. Only one feasible plan has been presented for doing this. If you or any one else had presented a better plan I certainly should have adopted it. But all of your plans require re-enforcements, which it is impossible to give you. It is very easy to ask for re-enforcements, but it is not so easy to give them when you have no disposable troops at your command.

"I have written very plainly as I understand the case, and I hope you will give me credit for having fully considered the matter, although I may have arrived at very different conclusions from your own." *

This, of course, settled the matter, though very much to the disappointment of General McClellan; and as the abandonment of the camp at Harrison's Landing was not finally completed until the 16th of August, his movements were deemed unwarrantably slow, and it was believed by Halleck, and generally in Washington, that he was intentionally delaying the movement that had been ordered. But the following facts entirely disprove this unjust criticism. Up to the 4th of August he had every reason to believe that he was to be re-enforced by at least twenty thousand men, and his previous orders to send off the sick were interpreted by him to comprise only those not likely soon to recuperate, but not the convalescent, who in a short time might return to duty and in the meantime could be made useful with the army. This was entirely justi-

* Official War Records, Series I, vol. xi, part i, p. 82.

fiable under the point of view that the army was to make an advance toward Richmond from its base on the James, and he was in this expectation until the arrival of Halleck's telegram of the 3d of August—that is, until the morning of the 4th. But from this time on he used every effort to carry out his orders to abandon his base, and all of the delay can be wholly accounted for by his lack of transportation, wharf facilities, etc., as is clearly shown by the reports of his quartermasters and medical officers. On the other hand, the Washington officials took into consideration only the actual number of the vessels with the army in the James River and at Fort Monroe, without at the same time appreciating that the great bulk of them were laden with supplies for the army, constituting in reality a mere floating depot and were therefore not available for the immediate uses of transport for the material and *personnel* of an army of over one hundred thousand men, with its animals, wagons, baggage, stores, and other proportions of enormous impedimenta. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that much recrimination was indulged in and bad feeling was engendered, that found expression afterward in the explanations that were submitted for the ill success of Pope's campaign.

To return now to Lee's army. After McClellan had retired within the lines of Harrison's Landing and Lee had arrived at the conclusion that an attack would not be justifiable, he was forced to move his army back to the environs of Richmond in order to supply it, keeping only a reasonable force on the New Market road in observation. So long as McClellan kept his position he threatened Richmond from the south, and the bulk of the Confederate army was obliged to remain waiting McClellan's initiative. From every source troops were drawn to re-enforce the main Confederate army, in order to bring it up to its maximum strength and to supply the heavy losses it had experienced in the Seven Days' fighting. On the 13th of July Jackson, with his own and Ewell's division, was ordered to

the vicinity of Gordonsville to hold Pope in check, while the rest of the Confederate army was held in the vicinity of Richmond to await McClellan's dispositions. But on the 13th of August, Lee, hearing that Burnside was embarked for Aquia Creek and that some of McClellan's troops were also *en route* for the same destination, sent Longstreet forward on the 15th, and afterward the remainder of the army, except D. H. Hill's divisions, to join Jackson in order to inaugurate an offensive campaign against Pope, hoping to gain some advantage before Pope could be re-enforced by the Army of the Potomac. Thus it was that the theater of war was transferred from the vicinity of Richmond to the territory north of the Rappahannock, which terminated in the second battle of Manassas.

In this campaign McClellan had no active participation. His functions were first limited to forwarding the several corps of the Army of the Potomac from their points of embarkation—Fort Monroe, Newport News, and Yorktown to Alexandria and Aquia Creek—as rapidly as transportation could be supplied. When disembarked they were sent forward to Pope, and then passed from under the control of McClellan. The exigencies of the situation compelled Halleck to direct that the infantry of the several corps be hastened forward, and thus their cavalry and artillery were left behind to come later when transportation became available. Of the five corps of the Army of the Potomac, Porter's disembarked at Aquia, August 22d, Heintzelman's the same day at Alexandria, Franklin's on the 24th, and Sumner's on the 28th at Alexandria, Keyes's corps being retained temporarily at Yorktown. McClellan himself, with his staff and escort, left Fort Monroe August 23d, arrived at Aquia on the 24th, and in obedience to Halleck's wish came to Alexandria, August 26th, to take charge of matters, as very great irregularities had been reported as existing there. He endeavored to ascertain exactly what his status was, but could get no definite information except that he was charged with forwarding troops and supplies from

Alexandria to Pope's army. There seems to be no reasonable doubt that he was then somewhat discredited and practically ignored, a mere intermediary through whom Halleck might transmit such orders to the fragmentary parts of the Army of the Potomac that were *en route* as he saw fit. Indeed, the Army of the Potomac was temporarily broken up, and instead of finding himself in command of the combined forces, as Halleck had more than once indicated to him would be the case should the Army of the Potomac be joined with that of Virginia, McClellan was reduced to the command of a corporal's guard.

Though this deprivation of his military command proved to be but temporary, it doubtless would have been permanent had General Pope's campaign terminated successfully. The latter had come from the West with the reputation of an aggressive leader, glorified by his success at Island No. 10, and had omitted no opportunity while in Washington of impressing upon the powerful supporters of the Administration the efficacy of the new methods of warfare that he proposed to adopt. His fertile imagination and exuberance of expression captivated the Committee on the Conduct of the War. His criticisms of McClellan's Peninsular campaign and strong recommendations to withdraw that army served to cast suspicion upon McClellan's military judgment and reputation, and to justify in the minds of the responsible authorities his exclusion from any active participation in military operations. Halleck, though more cautious in expressing opinions, had become committed to McClellan's withdrawal and to the management of the operations then being conducted by Pope to hold Lee in check while the Army of the Potomac was brought forward to Pope's assistance. The course of events had eliminated McClellan's active employment, temporarily at least, and should success attend the efforts of Halleck and Pope, there seems to be no doubt that McClellan's military career in any high command would have ended at this time.

But important military events were crowding forward with unprecedented rapidity. General Lee, having the great advantage of uninterrupted rail communication from Richmond to Gordonsville, was able to concentrate the bulk of his army on the Rapidan by the 16th of August in close contact with Pope, just about the time when the last of the Army of the Potomac was evacuating Harrison's Landing, which compelled Pope to fall back to the Rappahannock line. Failing in his first plan of turning Pope's left, Lee sent Jackson's corps on a long flank march to turn the Union right, and on the 26th Jackson struck Pope's line of communications at Bristoe Station, and that same evening captured the garrison and the immense stock of supplies belonging to Pope's army at Manassas. This bold strategic movement of Jackson, though resulting in immediate advantage to the Confederates, gave Pope an unexpectedly great opportunity to achieve an immense success. A rapid concentration of his army upon Gainesville, entirely feasible up to the 28th of August, would have isolated Jackson from the remaining half of the Confederate army, and his defeat would have followed. But on this day a most unfortunate movement of McDowell's and Sigel's corps left the avenue open for Jackson's escape, and also afforded Longstreet the opportunity to bring the right wing of the Confederate army into junction with Jackson. This movement was successfully accomplished by noon of the 29th, and from this time Pope could in reality expect no decided advantage over his adversary either by reason of his relative numerical strength or tactical position. The campaign ended, after two days' severe fighting on the 29th and 30th, in a bloody defeat of the Union forces and their withdrawal to the lines of Washington.

General Pope had been re-enforced by Porter's and Heintzelman's corps and Reynolds's division of the Army of the Potomac, but neither Franklin's nor Sumner's corps, aggregating some twenty-three thousand

men, had joined him in time for the final battle. Very severe strictures have been passed upon General McClellan for his failure to send forward Franklin's corps, which, it will be remembered, had arrived at Alexandria on the 26th, apparently in ample time to have made junction with Pope, and certainly much before the 29th of August. To this subject we shall now refer.

Taylor's brigade of Franklin's corps had been sent forward to the railroad bridge over Bull Run by rail early on the morning of the 27th, followed by two regiments of Cox's Kanawha division, but this force was defeated by a portion of A. P. Hill's division in front of Manassas and driven back. From this time all direct communication between Halleck and Pope was interrupted until the 29th, and the gravest apprehensions were entertained as to the fate of his army. Rumors were prevalent that Pope's army had been defeated and cut off from its line of retreat, and the enemy, one hundred and twenty thousand strong, was making to the right by the way of Vienna to capture Washington. Halleck was earnestly endeavoring to have Franklin's corps move out from Alexandria to open communication with Pope, and McClellan was repeatedly directed to see that this was effected. The failure of the latter to carry out Halleck's orders in this respect has subjected McClellan to the severest criticism, even to the extent that he was actuated by the desire of seeing Pope defeated in order that he might be rehabilitated in supreme military command. And even at this late day there exists a wide diversity of settled opinion between the partisans of both generals as to the motives of McClellan—opinions that received their initial direction at the time of the impending crisis and which have become crystallized by passionate denunciation, injustice, and the inability of men upon whom vast responsibilities were then committed accurately to gauge the springs of each other's action.

In attempting to reach a rational solution we may with propriety assume that all the great actors were loyal patriots, much more concerned with the success

of the cause than with their personal and professional fortunes. But this concession does not forbid the assumption of the hypothesis that Halleck, McClellan, and Pope may each have entertained altogether different views as to the situation and military necessities of the time. McClellan has left on record the expression of his extreme distrust of Pope's military ability, and Pope had severely criticised that of McClellan in his testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of the War. Halleck had assured Pope also that he might with certainty expect the arrival of the re-enforcements from the Army of the Potomac some days before they actually came. The delay that ensued in the execution of this promise caused Pope to feel that he was not willingly supported by McClellan, but this is now known to have been entirely unwarranted in point of fact.

Up to noon of the 26th Halleck believed that the Confederates in strong force were moving to the Shenandoah Valley, and so informed McClellan, who was then at Aquia Creek. Direct communication having been cut that night between Washington and Pope, he learns the next day from Porter through Burnside at Aquia that a battle is imminent, and in his dispatch to McClellan communicating this information, says: "Franklin's corps should move out by forced marches, carrying three or four days' provisions, and to be supplied as far as possible by railroad." At 12.05 P. M. on the same day McClellan replies that the orders had been transmitted to the senior officer present with Franklin's corps, to place it in readiness to move at once, Franklin and his two division commanders being then in Washington. Presumably these superior officers of the corps had gone to Washington to endeavor to get horses and transportation, so that the corps might be able to move. So far, then, Halleck's earnest desire that Franklin should move to open communication with Pope had been responded to by McClellan, who had then done all that was possible for him to carry out Halleck's wishes. But at 1.15 P. M., August

27th, McClellan's cautious timidity had been awakened, as is evident by the following dispatch to Halleck: "Franklin's artillery have no horses except for four guns without caissons. I can pick up no cavalry. In view of these facts, will it not be well to push Sumner's corps here by water as rapidly as possible, to make immediate arrangements for placing the works in front of Washington in an efficient condition of defense? I have no means of knowing the enemy's force between Pope and ourselves. Can Franklin, without his artillery or cavalry, effect any useful purpose in front? Should not Burnside take steps at once to evacuate Falmouth and Aquia, at the same time covering the retreat of any of Pope's troops who may fall back in that direction? I do not see that we have force enough in hand to form a connection with Pope, whose exact position we do not know. Are we safe in the direction of the Valley?" Again, at twenty-five minutes to two, in communicating his information of the disaster that had overtaken Taylor's brigade, he says: "I think our policy now is to make these works perfectly safe, and mobilize a couple of corps as soon as possible, but not to advance them until they can have their artillery and cavalry."

From this instant Washington, threatened, as McClellan believed, by way of Vienna, was, in his mind, of the first importance, while Pope's army was of secondary consideration. Halleck had telegraphed him in the afternoon of the 27th: "As you must be aware, more than three quarters of my time is taken up with the raising of new troops and matters in the West. I have no time for details. You will therefore, as ranking general in the field, direct as you deem best; but at present orders for Pope's army should go through me." Under the authority conveyed in this dispatch McClellan held back Franklin's corps until its artillery could be horsed and transportation furnished, and also halted Cox's Kanawha division, which, late in the afternoon of the 27th, was under orders to take cars at Alexandria to go to the front. He also was

actively engaged in attending to the necessities of the defensive line of works on the south bank of the Potomac, to put it in a more efficient state lest the enemy should place Washington in jeopardy. During the night he was in personal consultation with Halleck in Washington, and it appears that the latter then understood that Franklin was to move out the next day to drive the enemy from the railroad, but finding that he had not so moved, sent him a direct order to do so. To this McClellan replied at 1 P. M.: "Your dispatch to Franklin received. I have been doing all possible to hurry artillery and cavalry. The moment Franklin can be started with a reasonable amount of artillery he shall go." But McClellan still persists in his view that "the great object is to collect the whole army in Washington, ready to defend the works and act upon the flank of any force crossing the upper Potomac."

But now Halleck becomes more insistent. At 3.30 P. M., August 28th, he telegraphs: "Not a moment must be lost in pushing as large a force as possible toward Manassas, so as to communicate with Pope before the enemy is re-enforced." And the answer is: "Neither Franklin's nor Sumner's corps is now in condition to move and fight a battle. It would be a sacrifice to send them out now. I have sent aids to ascertain the condition of the command of Cox and Taylor, but I still think that a premature movement in small force will accomplish nothing but the destruction of the troops sent out. I report that I will lose no time in preparing the troops now here for the field, and that whatever orders you may give after hearing what I have to say will be carried out." At 7.40 P. M. came peremptory orders for the movement of Franklin's corps for the next morning, "ready or not ready," and at 10 P. M. McClellan responds that he has issued the necessary orders for Franklin to move at six o'clock in the morning.

That this movement of Franklin's was not in accord with McClellan's judgment of the supposed state of affairs is undoubted, and abundantly confirmed by

its slow progress which received his sanction. It proceeded that day only as far as Annandale, about eight miles, when General W. F. Smith, commanding the leading division, sent back reports derived from stragglers that the enemy was advancing in force from beyond Fairfax Court House, and these reports being transmitted to McClellan, the latter directed Franklin to remain that night at Annandale. This dilatory progress called forth a rebuke from Halleck, whereupon McClellan assumed the responsibility of the order for the halt, saying: "It was not safe for Franklin to move beyond Annandale, under the circumstances, until we knew what was at Vienna. General Franklin remained here (Alexandria) until about 1 P. M., endeavoring to arrange for supplies for his command. I am responsible for both these circumstances, and do not see that either was in disobedience of your orders. Please give me distinct orders in reference to Franklin's movements of to-morrow."

Another circumstance, occurring August 29th, added its detracting influence. In his reply to an inquiry of the President asking for news, after answering, he adds: "I am clear that one of two courses should be adopted: First, to concentrate all our available forces to open communications with Pope; second, to leave Pope to get out of his scrape, and at once use all our means to make the capital perfectly safe. No middle ground will now answer. Tell me what you wish me to do, and I will do all in my power to accomplish it. I wish to know what my orders and authority are. I ask for nothing, but will obey whatever orders you give. I only ask a prompt decision that I may at once give the necessary orders. It will not do to delay longer."

The foregoing quotations from Halleck's and McClellan's dispatches suffice to show that these two commanders had a very different view of the problem then confronting them, and consequently were often at cross purposes in their attempts to solve it. Uppermost in McClellan's mind was the imminent danger of the loss

of Washington, and while he knew nothing of what had happened to Pope he was not apprehensive of the ultimate safety of his army, believing that, if defeated, he had an avenue of escape by way of the Occoquan. But the safety of Washington was a matter of supreme importance, and he felt that all his efforts should primarily be directed to that end. In addition to this, if we give due weight to the habit he had of overestimating the numbers and activity of the enemy, we will have a logical explanation of his conduct, which is in perfect keeping with all the characteristics that he had heretofore exhibited. These characteristics made him antagonistic to any aggressive movement toward Centreville, where the enemy was reported in force, and were in accord with that cautious preparation for defense of the line which was then so vulnerable, and which, to his mind, it was so essential to hold. Halleck, on the other hand, by devoting the greater part of his time and energy to matters of less immediate importance, such as those connected with affairs in the West and raising new troops, failed to give that controlling and directing attention to the crisis which was then involving the safety of Pope's army, an attention which was especially incumbent upon the general in chief at that time.

The dispatches from Pope to Halleck on the 30th, some hours after the battle of that day had ended, were not disheartening, but rather encouraging, ending with the statement, "We have lost nothing—neither guns nor wagons." But at a quarter to eleven the next morning came the inquiry: "I should like to know whether you feel secure about Washington should this army be destroyed? I shall fight it as long as a man will stand up to the work. You must judge what is to be done, having in view the safety of the capital." McClellan had, on the night of the 30th, sent his aid, Major Hammerstein, to the front to ascertain the exact condition of affairs, and the latter returned at about 3 A. M. and reported Pope's army was badly whipped and the condition of affairs was critical. The next

morning McClellan visited Washington, and there, in Halleck's office, was directed to take charge of Washington and its defenses, but was expressly forbidden to exercise any control over the active troops under General Pope. At this interview McClellan tried to impress upon Halleck the facts in regard to the condition of Pope's army that he had learned from Hammerstein, but Halleck could not be persuaded that affairs at the front were in so critical a state. Finally, after much persuasion, Colonel Kelton, of Halleck's office, was sent out to ascertain the condition. In the meantime a large number of stragglers were then making their way into Washington, and the rumors of a great disaster were exercising their baneful influence upon the public mind. When Kelton returned and made known to Halleck and the President that the conditions were much worse than even McClellan had represented, that the army was entirely defeated and was falling back on Washington in confusion, more than thirty thousand stragglers being then on the roads, almost a panic ensued. Even some of the Cabinet members gave orders for the removal of public property, believing that Washington was certainly lost. In this critical state of affairs Mr. Lincoln came with General Halleck, early on the 2d of September, and asked McClellan to resume command and do the best that could be done. McClellan promptly responded with assurances that his services were at the command of the President.

CHAPTER XIV.

McCLELLAN AND THE ADMINISTRATION.—LEE'S MARYLAND CAMPAIGN.—BATTLES OF SOUTH MOUNTAIN GAPS.—BATTLE OF ANTIETAM.—McCLELLAN'S FINAL REMOVAL.

But during these days the most active personal hostility had developed in the minds of Mr. Lincoln's advisers against McClellan. On the 28th of August Mr. Stanton addressed a letter to General Halleck, requesting information as to the date when McClellan was first ordered to move from the James River, and when the movement was actually commenced; what orders he had received for the movement of Franklin's corps, and whether both of these orders had been obeyed with that promptness that the national safety had required. Halleck's reply was decidedly unfavorable to McClellan, and served to confirm in Stanton's mind the belief that McClellan was both incompetent and disobedient. He therefore prepared a letter, to be signed by the members of the Cabinet, for presentation to the President, as follows:

Mr. President: The undersigned feel compelled by a profound sense of duty to the Government and the people of the United States, and to yourself as your constitutional advisers, respectfully to recommend the immediate removal of George B. McClellan from any command in the armies of the United States. We are constrained to urge this by the conviction that, after a sad and humiliating trial of twelve months, and by the frightful and useless sacrifice of the lives of many thousand brave men and the waste of many millions of national means, he has proved to be incompetent for any important military command, and also because, by recent disobedience of superior orders and inactivity he has twice imperilled the fate of the army commanded by General Pope,

and while he continues in command will daily hazard the fate of our armies and our national existence, exhibiting no sign of a disposition or capacity to restore by courage or diligence the national honor that has been so deeply tarnished in the eyes of the world by his military failures. We are unwilling to be accessory to the destruction of our armies, the protraction of the war, the waste of our national resources, and the overthrow of the Government, which we believe must be the inevitable consequence of George B. McClellan being continued in command, and seek, therefore, by his prompt removal to afford an opportunity to capable officers, under God's providence, to preserve our national existence.

This paper, after being modified by Secretary Chase, was signed by both himself and Stanton, but though it is averred that its statements were assented to by others of the Cabinet, none of them subscribed to it. Subsequently, on the 1st of September, the Secretaries of War, the Treasury, the Interior, and the Attorney General united in signing the following paper, which, however, was never presented to the President:

"The undersigned, who have been honored with your selection as a part of your constitutional advisers, deeply impressed with our great responsibility in the present crisis, do but perform a painful duty in declaring to you our deliberate opinion that at this time it is not safe to intrust to Major-General McClellan the command of any army of the United States. And we hold ourselves ready at any time to explain to you in detail the reasons upon which this opinion is founded."

But the President was himself fully aware of the intense feeling against McClellan in the minds not only of nearly all the members of his Cabinet, but generally throughout the community, among the members of Congress, and the supporters of his Administration. It required all the characteristic firmness and individuality of that remarkable man to put himself in opposition to this powerful sentiment, and to pursue a course of action that seemed to him essential to meet so critical an emergency. Secretary Welles says: "At the stated Cabinet meeting on Tuesday, the 2d of September,

while the whole community was stirred up and in confusion, and affairs were gloomy beyond anything that had previously occurred, Stanton entered the council room a few moments in advance of Mr. Lincoln, and said, with great excitement, he had just learned from General Halleck that the President had placed McClellan in command of the forces in Washington. The information was surprising and, in view of the prevailing excitement against that officer, alarming. The President soon came in and, in answer to an inquiry from Mr. Chase, confirmed what Stanton had stated. General regret was expressed, and Stanton, with some feeling, remarked that no order to that effect had issued from the War Department. The President, calmly but with some emphasis, said the order was his, and he would be responsible for it to the country. With a retreating and demoralized army tumbling in upon us, and alarm and panic in the community, it was necessary, the President said, that something should be done, but there seemed to be no one to do it. He therefore had directed McClellan, who knew this whole ground, who was the best organizer in the army, whose faculty was to organize and defend, and who would here act on the defensive, to take this defeated and shattered army and reorganize it. He knew full well the infirmities of McClellan, who was not an affirmative man; was worth little for an onward movement; but beyond any other officer he had the confidence of the army, and he could more efficiently and speedily reorganize it and put it in condition than any other general. If the Secretary of War, or any member of the Cabinet, would name a general that could do this as promptly and well, he would appoint him. For an active fighting general he was sorry to say McClellan was a failure; he had the 'slows'; was never ready for battle, and probably never would be; but for this exigency, when organization and defense were needed, he considered him the best man for the service, and the country must have the benefits of his talents though he had behaved badly. The President said he had seen

and given his opinion to General Halleck, who was still general in chief; but Halleck had no plan or views of his own, proposed to do nothing himself, and fully approved his calling upon McClellan. . . . A long discussion followed, closing with acquiescence in the decision of the President, but before separating the Secretary of the Treasury expressed his apprehension that the reinstatement of McClellan would prove a national calamity." *

To exhibit still further the attitude of Mr. Lincoln with regard to McClellan, we quote Secretary Welles's account of a personal interview, held on the succeeding Friday. He says: "The President said most of our troubles grew out of military jealousies. Whether changing the plan of operations (discarding McClellan and placing Pope in command in front) was wise or not, was not now the matter in hand. These things, right or wrong, had been done. If the Administration had erred, the country should not have been made to suffer nor our brave men been cut down and butchered. Pope should have been sustained, but he was not. These personal and professional quarrels came in. Whatever may have been said to the contrary, it could not be denied that the army was with McClellan. He had so skillfully handled his troops in not getting to Richmond as to retain their confidence. The soldiers certainly had not transferred their confidence to Pope. He could, however, do no more good in this quarter. It was humiliating, after what had transpired and all we knew, to reward McClellan and those who failed to do their whole duty in the hour of trial, but so it was. Personal considerations must be sacrificed for the public good. He had kept aloof from the dissensions that prevailed, and intended to; 'but,' said he, 'I must have McClellan to reorganize the army and bring it out of chaos. There has been a design, a purpose, in breaking down Pope, without regard to the consequences to the country, that is atrocious. It is shocking to see

* Welles: Lincoln and Seward, p. 194.

and know this, but there is no remedy at present. McClellan has the army with him." *

Mr. Lincoln's unfavorable opinion was derived in a great measure from a dispatch sent by Pope, September 1st, to Halleck, in which he distinctly charged many brigade and some division commanders of the Army of the Potomac with unsoldierly and dangerous conduct, and specifically cited the actions of a corps and a division commander (Porter and Griffin), in such terms as indicated that he believed them utterly disloyal to the commander of the army and the cause of its defeat. He closes by saying: "You have hardly an idea of the demoralization among officers of high rank in the Potomac army, arising in all instances from personal feeling in relation to changes of commander in chief and others. These men are mere tools and parasites, but their example is producing, and must necessarily produce, very disastrous results." Upon the receipt of this dispatch Mr. Lincoln requested McClellan to write to Porter and others to ask them to give General Pope a hearty co-operation. In obedience to the request of the President, and without knowing the cause of the request, McClellan wrote to Porter at once, saying: "I ask of you, for my sake, that of the country, and of the old Army of the Potomac, that you and all friends will lend the fullest and most cordial co-operation to General Pope in all the operations now going on. The destinies of our country, the honor of our arms, are at stake, and all depends now upon the cheerful co-operation of all in the field. This week is the crisis of our fate. Say the same thing to all my friends in the Army of the Potomac, and that the last request I have to make of them is, that for their country's sake they will extend to General Pope the same support they ever have to me. . I am in charge of the defenses of Washington. I am doing all I can to render your retreat safe, should that become necessary." To which the gallant Porter, himself unaware that a most unjust

* Welles: Lincoln and Seward, p. 197.

and undeserved reproach had been cast upon him, replied: "You may rest assured that all your friends, as well as every lover of his country, will ever give, as they have given, to General Pope their cordial co-operation and constant support in the execution of all orders and plans. Our killed, wounded, and enfeebled troops attest our devoted duty."

It was under this distressful and discouraging condition of affairs that McClellan was placed in command of the troops for the defense of Washington. The President, forced in spite of the opposition of the majority of his Cabinet to retain him, and at the same time believing that neither he nor his subordinates had given willing and efficient support to Pope in the late campaign, had certainly much to endure. But it was not long before matters assumed a more cheerful aspect. The army received the news of McClellan's resumption of command with enthusiasm, its tone was improved, and its security assured. Within a short time the several corps were located as near as possible in their former positions behind the defenses of Washington, so that the safety of the city was no longer endangered. McClellan set to work at once to perfect its organization, to see to its re-equipment, provide it with its immediate necessities, and thus restore to it the needful confidence that it could resist with certainty any attack the enemy might intend to make upon its line of defense. And thus it was that Mr. Lincoln was justified in the decision that he had made to restore McClellan to the command.

In the meanwhile General Lee had to determine immediately upon his course of action. By his magnificent strategy and successful tactical combinations on the field of battle he had within a little over two months driven McClellan from in front of Richmond to the unhealthy banks of the James River; then turning on Pope, had driven him in total defeat to the protection of the defenses of Washington, before he could be wholly re-enforced by the Army of the Potomac, and now had shut up both armies, defeated, dispirited, and shorn of

their aggressive power, within their intrenchments. Surely he was entitled to consider his veterans invincible against any army that could be immediately brought against them. Under these circumstances he quickly decided to cross the upper Potomac by the fords in the vicinity of Leesburg and invade Maryland, and so much was he at this time the arbiter of his own action that, without waiting for the approval of Mr. Davis, he contented himself with announcing his decision to the Confederate President, and on September 2d he issued his orders for the march. In his official report he gives the reasons that impelled his taking this step. He says: "The war was thus transferred from the interior to the frontier, and the supplies of rich and productive districts made accessible to our army. To prolong a state of affairs in every way desirable, and not to permit the season for active operations to pass without endeavoring to inflict further injury upon the enemy, the best course appeared to be the transfer of the army into Maryland. Although not properly equipped for invasion, lacking much of the material of war, and feeble in transportation, the troops poorly provided with clothing, and thousands of them destitute of shoes, it was yet believed to be strong enough to detain the enemy upon the northern frontier until the approach of winter should render his advance into Virginia difficult, if not impracticable. The condition of Maryland encouraged the belief that the presence of our army, however inferior to that of the enemy, would induce the Washington Government to retain all its available force to provide against contingencies, which its course toward the people of that State gave it reason to apprehend. At the same time it was hoped that military success might afford us an opportunity to aid the citizens of Maryland in any efforts they might be disposed to make to recover their liberties. The difficulties that surrounded them were fully appreciated, and we expected to derive more assistance in the attainment of our object from the just fears of the Washington Government than from any active demonstration on

the part of the people, unless success should enable us to give them assurance of continued protection."

With commendable military promptness Lee hastened the march of his columns, and with D. H. Hill's division in advance, which had joined him from Richmond, September 2d, he had completed the concentration of his army in the vicinity of Frederick by the 7th of September, taking the line of the Monocacy as his defensive front against the advance of McClellan. Here he remained three days, to rest and recuperate his fatigued troops and arrange for the contemplated change in his line of supplies by way of the Shenandoah Valley. This latter became necessary to remove the danger of the line through Manassas, since the latter was now too near the Union forces to be secure. His intention was to move his army into western Maryland, establish his communications with Richmond through the Shenandoah Valley, and, by threatening Pennsylvania, induce his enemy to follow him and thus separate him from his base of supplies. But an unforeseen circumstance occurred to modify this plan. The Union garrison of Harper's Ferry, of about eight thousand men, under Colonel D. S. Miles, with an advanced post of about twenty-five hundred under General White, at Winchester, and about two thousand in the vicinity of Martinsburg, had not retired into Maryland upon the advance of the Confederates, as General Lee had anticipated they would do, and since they were on his proposed line of communications he felt that it was necessary to drive them from their position or capture them. General Halleck had directed Miles to hold his position to the last extremity, and had expected that he would be able to do so, at least until he could be relieved by McClellan. Orders had been sent to White to abandon Winchester, withdrawing his troops to Harper's Ferry, and then assume command at Martinsburg, and finally, if compelled to fall back upon Harper's Ferry, to join Miles there. These forces were at that time, and until September 12th, under the immediate command of General Wool, whose head-

quarters were at Baltimore, and although McClellan early advised Halleck to direct them to abandon their station and join the Army of the Potomac, Halleck would not consent to this suggestion. Under the circumstances, then, it was incumbent upon Lee to get rid of this threatening force situated upon his desired line of communication with Richmond, and accordingly, on September 9th, he issued the celebrated orders (No. 191) which had such an important bearing upon the subsequent campaign. They were as follows:

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
September 9, 1862.

Special Orders, No. 191.

The army will resume its march to-morrow, taking the Hagerstown road. General Jackson's command will form the advance, and, after passing Middletown with such portion as he may select, take the route toward Sharpsburg, cross the Potomac at the most convenient point, and by Friday morning take possession of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, capture such of them as may be at Martinsburg, and intercept such as may attempt to escape from Harper's Ferry.

General Longstreet's command will pursue the main road as far as Boonsborough, where it will halt with the reserve, supply, and baggage trains of the army.

General McLaws, with his own division and that of General R. H. Anderson, will follow General Longstreet. On reaching Middletown will take the route to Harper's Ferry, and by Friday morning possess himself of the Maryland Heights and endeavor to capture the enemy at Harper's Ferry and vicinity.

General Walker, with his division, after accomplishing the object in which he is now engaged, will cross the Potomac at Cheek's Ford, ascend its right bank to Lovettsville, take possession of Loudoun Heights, if practicable, by Friday morning, Keys' Ford on his left, and the road between the end of the mountain and the Potomac on his right. He will, as far as practicable, co-operate with General McLaws and General Jackson and intercept the retreat of the enemy.

General D. H. Hill's division will form the rear guard of the army, pursuing the road taken by the main body. The reserve artillery, ordnance, and supply trains, etc., will precede General Hill.

General Stuart will detach a squadron of cavalry to accompany the commands of Generals Longstreet, Jackson, and McLaws, and with the main body of the cavalry will cover the route of the army, bringing up all stragglers that may have been left behind.

The commands of Generals Jackson, McLaws, and Walker, after accomplishing the objects for which they have been detached, will join the main body of the army at Boonsborough or Hagerstown.

Each regiment on the march will habitually carry its axes in the regimental ordnance wagons, for use of the men at their encampments to procure wood, etc.

R. H. CHILTON, *Assistant Adjutant General.**

The disappearance of the Confederate troops from the front of the defensive line south of Washington left McClellan uncertain as to Lee's plans. To provide for every contingency, he first made such dispositions of his troops that the line of works from Fort Ethan Allen at Chain Bridge to Fort Lyon near Alexandria should be thoroughly defensible, and then sent such cavalry as was available to watch the fords of the Potomac in the vicinity of Poolesville, to give timely notice of any attempt on the part of the enemy to cross into Maryland. Orders were issued on the 3d of September from the War Department to organize an army with all possible dispatch for active operations independent of the forces deemed necessary for the defense of Washington; and McClellan was the same day directed by General Halleck to report the approximate force of each corps of the armies in the vicinity of Washington which could be prepared within the next two days to take the field, and also was directed to have them supplied and ready for such service. Just about the time that General Lee was concentrating his army at Frederick, McClellan had organized this active army, and on the 6th of September its constituent parts were the First and Ninth Corps, commanded respectively by Hooker and Reno, forming the right wing under Burnside, which was then advanced to Leesborough; the center, under Sumner, comprising his own corps, the Second, and the Twelfth, under Williams, at Rockville; the left wing, under Franklin, formed of his own (Sixth) corps and Couch's division of the Fourth

* Official War Records, vol. xix, part ii, p. 603.

Corps, the former being at Tenallytown and the latter at Offut's crossroads; Sykes's division of regulars, the reserve, at Tenallytown, completed the active army as at first constituted. General Banks was, on the 8th, placed in command of the defenses of Washington, General A. S. Williams succeeding to the command of his corps now designated as the Twelfth. General Casey was charged with the instruction of the new regiments that were now coming into Washington, and which were as soon as possible thereafter assigned to the several corps of the army. Porter's Fifth, Heintzelman's Third, and Sigel's Eleventh Corps were for the present retained in the defenses south of the Potomac; in all, about seventy-three thousand men of new and old troops comprised the force thus assigned for the defense of Washington.

McClellan left Washington on the 7th and established his headquarters at Rockville on the 8th, where it remained until the 11th, and thence successively to Middlebrook and Urbana on the 12th, and on the next day to Frederick. During the greater portion of this time both Halleck and McClellan were uncertain as to Lee's designs, the former, indeed, being impressed with the idea that Lee contemplated drawing the Army of the Potomac sufficiently far from Washington as to enable him by a rapid movement by the south bank of the river to capture Washington, while McClellan, bearing in mind the necessity to cover Washington and Baltimore, was obliged to move with one flank on the Potomac and the other on the railroad, so that he felt it necessary to advance with such caution as to provide for a rapid concentration of his army in either eventuality. Certainly it was not much before the 10th of September that McClellan was at all certain that the whole of Lee's army was committed to an invasion of Maryland. On the 12th, Fitz-John Porter's two divisions of the Fifth Corps, which had been left behind in the defenses, were ordered to join the active army, and this accession brought McClellan's strength up to about eighty-seven thousand men, while

his antagonist probably did not have more than fifty-five thousand.

The slow progress made by McClellan has been very severely criticised by military writers, for, until his arrival at Frederick, it did not average more than six miles a day. An excuse has been offered that the army had been greatly disorganized during the previous campaign, and that it needed abundant supplies for clothing and equipment. Be that as it may, it is nevertheless true that in this period no contact of infantry occurred with the enemy, the enemy's cavalry being sufficient to keep the Army of the Potomac from getting in touch with Lee's army and preventing anything like satisfactory information from being obtained for McClellan's guidance. However, when Frederick was occupied on the morning of the 13th, a copy of Lee's order, wrapped around three cigars, was picked up by a soldier and immediately sent to McClellan's headquarters. From a dispatch which McClellan sent to the President, dated September 13th, 12 M., it appears that this order reached his hands before noon of that day, for he says, "I have all the plans of the rebels, and will catch them in their own trap if my men are equal to the emergency." A dispatch received by McClellan on the 13th, from Governor Curtin, stating that Longstreet's division had occupied Hagerstown last night, and that Jackson had crossed the Potomac at Williamsport to capture Martinsburg and Harper's Ferry, gave the amplest confirmation of the authenticity of the order.

Certainly no greater piece of good fortune could have happened nor at a more opportune time than this which gave McClellan complete information of the wide dispersion of Lee's army, and which was so abundantly confirmed by every circumstance of the time. Assuming that McClellan gave it full authenticity—and of this there appears to be no reason to doubt—the possibilities of the situation were enormous. To comprehend them, let us mark the positions of the several fractions of each army as they were at

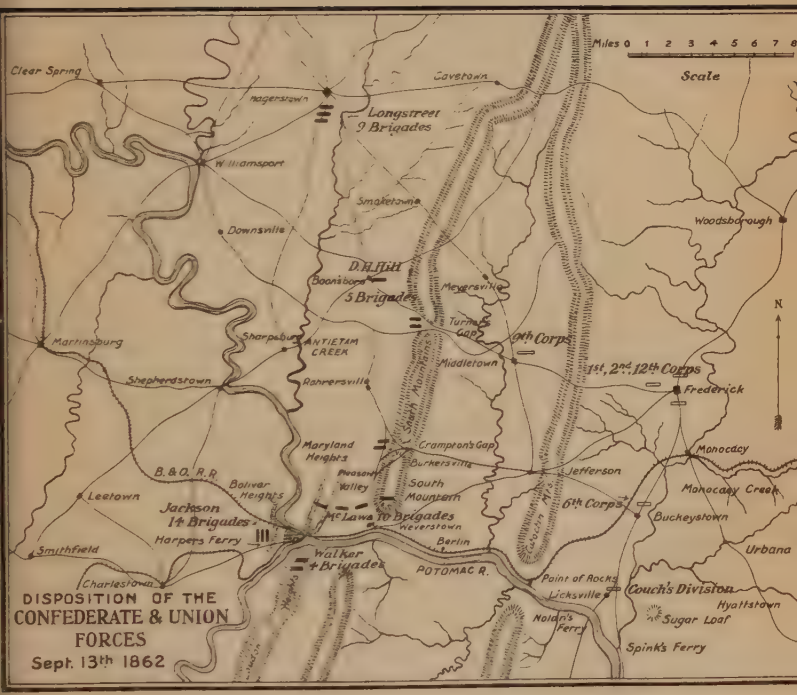
the instant that the dispatch was placed in McClellan's hands.

First with regard to the Confederate army, comprising forty brigades of infantry, three of cavalry, and seventy-seven batteries of artillery, which left Frederick in obedience to the requirements of Orders No. 191, heretofore quoted. It moved with celerity, especially Jackson's command, being much less encumbered with impedimenta than was McClellan's army. On the 13th, at midday, we find that its fragments were thus positioned: Jackson's three divisions, comprising fourteen brigades, had marched by Turner's Gap of the South Mountains through Boonsborough, crossing the Potomac at Williamsport, approached Martinsburg from the west, and had reached Halltown, investing Harper's Ferry; McLaws with his four brigades, and R. H. Anderson's six brigades, marched from Frederick on the 10th, following after Jackson, but diverged to pass the South Mountain at Crampton's and Brownsville Gaps, entering Pleasant Valley on the 11th; leaving Semmes's and Mahone's brigades to hold the gap, assisted by Munford's cavalry, McLaws sent Kershaw's and Barksdale's brigades, by way of Solomon's Gap, supported by Cobb's brigade, to capture Maryland Heights; Wright's brigade along the South Mountain Ridge to command the defile at Weverton, holding the remaining four brigades to form lines across Pleasant Valley; Walker's division of two brigades, after an unsuccessful attempt to destroy the aqueduct at the mouth of the Monocacy on the night of the 9th, crossed the Potomac the next night at Point of Rocks and marched to Loudoun Heights, which was reached on the morning of the 13th; the investing force of Confederates south of the Potomac, surrounding Harper's Ferry, therefore amounted to sixteen brigades, and these, with McLaws's ten brigades on the north side, made twenty-six brigades, or more than half of Lee's entire army. The remaining fourteen infantry brigades belonging to Longstreet's and D. H. Hill's commands, were at the

time referred to thus distributed: Five brigades of D. R. Jones's division, two of Hood's, and those of Evans's and Toombs's, or nine in all, belonging to Longstreet's corps, had reached Hagerstown on the 11th, and were there at midday on the 13th, while two of D. H. Hill's were at Turner's Pass, and the remaining three of this division were at Boonsborough, covering the rear of the Confederate army; Stuart's cavalry was east of the South Mountain passes watching the advance of the Union army, excepting the squadrons that had been detached for the commands of Jackson, McLaws, and Walker.

In comparison with this wide dispersion of the Confederate army at midday of the 13th of September, the position of the Union army was one of concentration; for the First, Second, Twelfth, a portion of the Ninth, and Sykes's division of the Fifth, were in the vicinity of Frederick, the Sixth at Buckeystown, Couch's division of the Fourth at Licksville, and the remainder of the Ninth at Middletown, supporting Pleasonton's cavalry, which was then in touch with the cavalry rear guard of the Confederates.

The military situation presented exceptional advantages to McClellan, and threatened the gravest of disasters to Lee. The generalship displayed by each of these commanders, whereby the one failed to reap the legitimate fruit of the situation and the other extricated himself in a masterly manner from his critical position, is exceedingly characteristic of their abilities and capacity for command. Thirty minutes should not have elapsed after coming into possession of Lee's plans before orders should have been issued by McClellan for the immediate and speedy movement of his several corps to the South Mountain passes, and Pleasonton should have been at once informed of the situation, with the necessity of extreme vigor of attack upon the Confederate rear guard. But it was not till a quarter to seven that Couch, with the rearmost division, was ordered to move to Jefferson, not that night but the next morning, in order to join Franklin, whose orders,


Miles 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Scale
N
Clear Spring
Hagerstown
Williamsport
Downsville
Martinsburg
Shepherdstown
Sharpsburg
ANTIETAM CREEK
Boonsboro
Cavetown
Longstreet 9 Brigades
Smaketowne
D.H.Hill 5 Brigades
Meyersville
Turner's Gap
Middletown
Rohrersville
Maryland Heights
Crampton's Gap
Burkittsville
Pleasant Valley
South Mountain
McLaws 10 Brigades
Weverstown
Berlin
Jackson 14 Brigades
Harpers Ferry
Walker 4 Brigades
POTOMAC R.
Point of Rocks
Licksville
Nolan's Ferry
Spink's Ferry
Couch's Division
Sugar Loaf
Hyattstown
Woodsborough
9th Corps
1st, 2nd, 12th Corps
Frederick
Jefferson
6th Corps
Monocacy
Monocacy Creek
Buckeystown
Urbana
Leetown
Bolivar Heights
B. & O. R.R.
Smithfield
Charlestown
DISPOSITION OF THE CONFEDERATE & UNION FORCES
Sept. 13th 1862

issued fifteen minutes earlier, and containing a complete review of the situation, directed him to move by Jefferson and Burkettsville upon Rohersville *at daybreak the next morning*. The remaining corps were also directed to move early on the 14th, and thus it was not until more than twenty-four hours after McClellan had come into possession of Lee's plans that the Army of the Potomac was in position to attempt the passage of the South Mountain Range, which interposed the only barrier to an attack upon the separated portions of Lee's army. In the meantime the unwonted activity of McClellan was noted by Lee's lieutenants, and he was indeed informed on the night of the 13th that McClellan was in possession of the "lost order." He was at that time at Hagerstown, thirteen miles distant, having with him, as before stated, Longstreet's nine brigades, and leaving only five brigades of D. H. Hill to defend the Boonsborough passes. With commendable military promptness, and even against the earnest advice of his able lieutenant, Longstreet, he ordered the immediate return of eight of these brigades to the support of Hill, starting them back at 3 A. M. on the 14th.

There were two separate battles at South Mountain on the 14th, that at Turner's and that at Crampton's Gaps, which were separated by a distance of eight miles. The latter was fought by Franklin's corps on the Union side against a Confederate force of about twenty-two hundred men, commanded by General Cobb. The attack began about three o'clock, and the position was carried by dusk; and Franklin, being joined by Couch's division on the western side of the gap at ten o'clock that night, found himself confronted by McLaws in Pleasant Valley. The battle at Turner's Gap was more considerable, since both the attacking and defending forces were stronger. On the 13th Pleasonton had driven the Confederate rear guard of cavalry through Middletown, and by evening to the base of the South Mountain Gap. Scammon's brigade, of Cox's Kanawha division, leaving Middletown

at six o'clock, reached the scene of action by nine o'clock, and was ordered forward by Pleasonton by the left to make the attack on Fox's Gap; it was shortly afterward supported by Crook's brigade, the entire division, under Cox, forming the extreme left of the Union line, and being opposed by Garland's brigade and Rosser's cavalry. The struggle at this point lasted until about noon, resulting to the advantage of the Union troops. In the meantime Reno's and Hooker's corps were hastening to the front, the former being directed to the left of the main gap and the latter to the right. Willcox's division of Reno's corps was the first to arrive after the lull in the battle caused by Cox's success over Garland, and it was finally posted on the right of Cox and on the left of the Sharpsburg road, after some time lost in executing contradictory orders of superior commanders. Later came Sturgis's and Rodman's divisions, having left their camps five miles back at one o'clock and reaching the battlefield at half past three o'clock. Reno was directed to move them up to the crest held by Cox, and Willcox, as soon as he was informed that Hooker's corps was attacking on the right, was well advanced up the mountain.

Hooker, marching from the Monocacy at daylight, reached Middletown at one o'clock, and was directed to attack by the old Hagerstown road, making thus a diversion in favor of Reno. With Meade's division on the right, Hatch's on the left, and Rickett's in reserve, the front covered by a strong body of skirmishers, the corps moved forward to the attack.

Considering now the Confederate dispositions at Turner's Gap, it may be said that Stuart's sturdy resistance on the 13th enabled Hill to send back Garland's and Colquitt's brigades to defend the gap, which they occupied that night. The next morning Hill sent forward his three remaining brigades, G. B. Anderson's coming to the support of Garland before the battle with Cox had lulled in the forenoon. This lull, which lasted for two hours, enabled Hill to get the other two brigades of Rodes and Ripley into posi-

tion, the former to support Garland and the latter to defend the approaches by way of the old Hagerstown road to the north of the main gap at Turner's. Soon after three o'clock Longstreet's brigades, after their long and dusty march, began to arrive on the field, and as soon as possible were placed in position. Drayton's and G. T. Anderson's, the first to arrive, were directed to the south side of the turnpike, then the most critical position; and later, Longstreet having arrived, Evans's, followed by Kemper's, Garnett's, and Jenkins's brigades, were sent to re-enforce Rodes on the north side of the turnpike. The main advance was made by the Union troops at about four o'clock and was desperately resisted by the Confederates. At nightfall the key of the pass on the north was in Hooker's possession, and although the Confederates still held the gap, their position was untenable, and they retreated to Boonsborough during the night.

The Union losses on the 14th were eighteen hundred and thirteen at Turner's and five hundred and thirty-three at Crampton's Gap, the greater portion of which may justly be regarded as the penalty exacted by the procrastination of the commanding general of the Union army.

A few words now with regard to the military blunder committed by the Union troops at Harper's Ferry. Here, by the 13th of September, Jackson had shut in some twelve thousand Union troops, whose position was untenable as soon as the enemy gained possession of Loudoun and Maryland Heights. The latter, after a slight resistance, were shamefully abandoned on the 14th by the officer commanding, Colonel Ford, and the former, not having been occupied by the Union troops, were readily seized by Walker's division the same day. Although the commander of the United States forces, Colonel D. S. Miles of the regular army, had been directed to hold his position to the last, his efforts were weak in the extreme, and the troops and position were surrendered at about half past eight on the morning of the 15th, an act which at once released

the greater portion of the twenty-six Confederate brigades detached for its capture. This enabled Jackson to return to Lee and bring with him a considerable portion of his troops to assist his chief out of the serious predicament which at that time threatened him.

On the 15th Lee retired with the fourteen brigades of Longstreet's and D. H. Hill's commands to the environs of Sharpsburg, receiving while on the way the grateful news of the capture of Harper's Ferry, and here he determined to make a stand against McClellan, hoping to be able to gather his widely detached forces in time to receive battle. By imperative orders the march of his detached divisions was hastened. Jackson's own division, under D. R. Jones, starting from Harper's Ferry at 1 A. M. on the 16th, reached Boteler's Ford at sunrise, reported for orders, and after a two hours' rest was assigned to its place in line of battle on the left of Hood; Ewell's division, then commanded by Lawton, also reported early in the morning of the 16th, and was placed on Lawton's left; while Walker's two brigades, leaving Loudoun Heights and crossing the Shenandoah on the afternoon of the 15th, arrived early on the 16th. These three divisions brought an accession of ten brigades to the fourteen that Lee had on the afternoon of the 15th, and thus lessened the great disparity of force then existing between the two combatants. There were, however, still absent from the Confederate army the ten brigades of McLaws's command and the six of A. P. Hill's. The former, withdrawing from Pleasant Valley during the night and early morning of the 16th, reached Sharpsburg by sunrise of the 17th and were most opportunely immediately put to work, while Hill, leaving only one brigade to finish the necessary operations of completing the surrender, marched with his remaining five at 7.30 A. M. on the 17th, and reached the battlefield with the head of his column at half past two in the afternoon, in time to oppose the farther advance of the Ninth Corps. The rapid marches of these brigades undoubtedly produced a great amount of straggling

among the Confederate soldiers, and would account in a great measure for the diminished strength that is claimed by their military authorities as the aggregate that stood up so bravely against the superior force of McClellan's army on the 17th. Nevertheless one can not help but pay a just tribute to the endurance of these courageous veterans of Lee's army, and recognize that their success was due as much to their expeditious marching under such adverse circumstances, as to their superb fighting qualities and the magnificent leadership of their general.

In striking contrast were the advancing movements of McClellan's superior army. On the morning of the 15th it was soon evident that the Confederates had abandoned the position at Turner's Gap, and the pursuit was at once undertaken by Pleasonton's cavalry and the divisions of Richardson and Sykes. McClellan's orders were to attack the enemy should they be found in retreat, but if in position to await his arrival. But they made no stand until they reached the other side of Antietam Creek, where Lee's artillery brought the pursuing divisions to a halt. In the meantime Franklin, overawed by the inferior force of McLaws, and concluding from the cessation of the artillery fire at Harper's Ferry that the latter place had fallen, did nothing but report his position to McClellan, and without an effort on his part allowed McLaws to make good his escape on the south bank of the Potomac by way of Harper's Ferry bridges. Very slowly did the remainder of the Army of the Potomac advance to the borders of Antietam Creek, and the advantageous opportunity of an aggressive action against Lee's small force on the afternoon of the 15th was lost. But certainly there was every reason to expect that this delay should not extend beyond the forenoon of the next day.

Burnside's movements on the 15th were especially provokingly slow. Ordered at 8 A. M., being then at Bolivar, the headquarters of the army, to move promptly on Boonsborough, and informed at 9 A. M. that Porter would follow him as a support, and "that

General McClellan desires to impress upon you the necessity for the utmost vigor in your pursuit," a delay of four hours ensued before Burnside's troops were put in motion, and Sykes's division was pushed ahead in conformity with Porter's soldierly instincts to hasten the advance. Although Antietam Creek was only about eight miles from Turner's Gap, so dilatory were the movements of the great bulk of the Union forces pursuing a defeated enemy that the concentration for battle against Lee was not well advanced until the night of the 15th, nor completed till the next morning. The next day was practically wasted, "being compelled," as McClellan himself says, "to spend the morning in reconnoitering the new position taken up by the enemy, examining the ground, finding fords, clearing the approaches, and hurrying up the ammunition and supply-trains, which had been delayed by the rapid march of the troops over the few practicable approaches from Frederick."

By noon of the 16th McClellan had determined upon his plan of battle, which, as he states, was as follows: "To attack the enemy's left with the corps of Hooker and Mansfield, supported by Sumner's, and, if necessary, by Franklin's; and as soon as matters looked favorably there, to move the corps of Burnside against the enemy's extreme right upon the ridge running to the south and rear of Sharpsburg, and, having carried their position, to press along the crest toward our right; and whenever either of these flank movements should be successful, to advance our center with all the forces then disposable."

There is now no question that McClellan had sufficient means at hand to carry out the designated plan to a successful issue, not only on the afternoon of the 16th, but even upon the morning of the 17th, when the whole Confederate army, save A. P. Hill's six brigades, was drawn up along the strong defensive position to the north and east of Sharpsburg. His failure must be attributed to the faulty character of his orders, tactical mistakes, and overestimation of the strength of the

N. WOODS
Nicodemus
D R Miller's
E. WOODS
W. WOODS
CORN FIELD
CREEK
ANTIETAM
Pry.
Dunker Church
Mumma
Roulette
General Line of Battle
Sunken Road
Hagerstown Pike
Piper
Bloody Lane
Boonsboro Pike
PORTERS TOWN
Direction of Confederate
ANTIETAM CREEK
To Shepherdstown
SHARPSBURG
Sept. 17th 1862
Burnside Bridge
To Rohrersville
General direction of Confederate Line of Battle (evening) Sept. 17, 1862
BATTLEFIELD OF ANTIETAM
Scale
0
1 Mile

enemy; these, combined with the superb conduct of the defense, where almost every brigade was used to the utmost of its resisting qualities, will readily account for all the phases of the battle. And it is with respect to these phases only that our attention need be directed to comprehend the qualities of leadership that belonged to McClellan.

The shortcomings of Burnside on the 15th in delaying his advance undoubtedly led to the withdrawal of Hooker's corps from his immediate command on the evening of that day, and it was accordingly placed on the right of the army, while his own corps was sent to the extreme left and placed near the bridge that afterward was called by his name. At 4 P. M. on the 16th Hooker crossed the Antietam by the bridge above Pry's Mill, under instructions to place his corps on the enemy's left, and Mansfield, with the Twelfth Corps, to the command of which he had been assigned at Bolivar, followed the First Corps some hours afterward in support. Sumner, with the Second Corps, was directed to be ready to cross at daylight the next morning, and the two divisions of Porter's Fifth Corps were designated as the main reserve to guard the center and the supply trains of the army. Burnside's Ninth Corps was intended to force the passage of the Antietam over the bridge and near-by fords, where the Rohersville road crosses to the village of Sharpsburg. The Sixth Corps, under Franklin, was still at Brownsville, and Couch's division of the Fourth Corps was directed to occupy Maryland Heights. Pleasonton's cavalry division with its horse artillery batteries was also kept in the center of the army near the position of Porter.

The topographical features of the field of Antietam are sufficiently delineated on the map to afford a general conception of the principal phases of the battle. From the village of Sharpsburg several roads radiate, of which the more prominent are: first, the Boonsborough Pike, by which the Confederates had retreated from South Mountain, and whose extension to Shepardstown on the southwest afforded the only line of

retreat across the Potomac at Boteler's Ford; second, the Hagerstown Pike, which, running northerly and nearly parallel to the direction of the Confederate defensive line, gave them the great advantage of a secure and easy communication for the movement of troops along their whole front, the extension of this road to the south leading to a crossing of the Antietam near its mouth; and, finally, the Rohersville road, which crossed the Antietam at Bridge No. 3, afterward known as Burnside's Bridge. The notable points to which attention should be directed, owing to their importance on the outcome of the battle, are principally these: the elevation on Nicodemus's farm, securely held by Stuart with artillery, cavalry, and infantry throughout the battle, and whose extreme importance was never recognized by the Union commanders; the West Woods, whose cover and natural intrenchments of outcropping limestone ledges gave the Confederates a secure holding that more than compensated for their lesser numbers; the East Woods, and the Cornfield lying between them and the Hagerstown road; the commanding ridge running to the south from these latter woods affording advantageous positions for the abundant artillery with which the Confederate army was supplied, and which, with the sunken road and Piper's House on the western and the farms of Mume and Rullet on the eastern slope, were the scenes of bloody struggles; and, lastly, the strong defensive features of the west bank of the Antietam at the Burnside Bridge, by means of which a few hundred brave men kept for so many hours an entire corps from crossing. Besides the two bridges mentioned, there were two others, No. 1 on the Keedysville road and No. 2 on the Boonsborough road; several fords also existed, of which two in the near vicinity of Burnside's Bridge were not known to the Union forces until about noon of the 17th.

To the impetuous Hooker McClellan confided the initiative of the battle, directing him to cross the Antietam with his corps of about twelve thousand five hundred and attack the Confederate left, promising

him the support of the Twelfth Corps, under Mansfield. This crossing was made at the upper or Keedysville Bridge about 4 P. M. on the 16th. Neither Hooker or McClellan knew anything of the enemy's position nor of the topography of the ground other than what could be learned from a distant view from the east side of the Antietam. McClellan rode forward to see Hooker shortly after the crossing had been made, and the latter, fully realizing his isolation and apprehensive lest he should have to fight the whole Confederate army with his single corps, sought to impress upon the commanding general the importance of being promptly re-enforced, as well as the necessity of a simultaneous attack upon the Confederate right. Shortly before dusk Hooker's skirmishers came in contact with those of the enemy in the vicinity of the East Woods, in which Seymour's brigade of Meade's division found their advance opposed by Hood's two brigades. After dark the firing ceased, although the opposing lines were very near each other, and Hooker dispatched a courier to inform McClellan of his progress and at the same time assuring him that the battle would be renewed at the earliest dawn, and expressing the hope that re-enforcements would be ordered forward in season to reach him before that moment.

With this end in view, Sumner was directed to cross the Twelfth Corps, then commanded by the aged General Mansfield, who had reported for duty and had been assigned to it but a day before, by the upper bridge in support of Hooker, and to hold the Second Corps in readiness to cross before daylight. The Twelfth Corps crossed at 2.15 A. M., and was placed in bivouac somewhat more than a mile in rear of the First Corps. Sumner, in command of the Second Corps, was also directed to have his command in readiness to cross by daybreak, but to await instructions. With his characteristic soldierly promptness he had his command ready to march at the appointed time, and reported himself at headquarters at early daylight for orders; and although waiting impatiently for his instructions, with the din of

battle in his ears, it was not until twenty minutes past seven that he could gallop off to place himself at the head of his waiting troops. This unwarrantable delay can only be accounted for by an extraordinary inefficiency of administration at general headquarters, which, in consideration of the extremely disastrous results that flowed from it, can not be sufficiently condemned. In the development of McClellan's plan of attack two other serious defects should be noted: one, the neglect to designate a single commander to conduct the operations of the right wing, and the other the employment of the cavalry division to develop the enemy's left. To Sumner, by virtue of his rank, the command on the right would naturally fall, but McClellan had designated Hooker to make the attack, and had assured him that he should have control of the troops sent to his support. From the foregoing causes the results that followed are merely logical consequences which could readily have been predicted by a master of the art of war.

The battle on the right naturally divides itself into three separate phases, namely, Hooker's attack, lasting from about half past five till half past seven; Mansfield's attack, from about seven till half past nine; and Sumner's, from half past nine till about noon, when Franklin's corps reached the field. Taking these in their order of sequence, our attention is first directed to Hooker in the early morning of the 17th. By 3 A. M. the opposing pickets began their deadly work, but it was not until about half past five that the battle was strongly opened. At this time the three divisions of Hooker's corps were thus deployed: Doubleday's on the right, on and near the Hagerstown pike; Meade's in the center, on the edge of the East Woods; and Ricketts's on the left, somewhat south of the convex portion of the Confederate line. In Doubleday's division Gibbon's brigade was in advance, supported by those of Patrick and Phelps, with Hofmann's still farther to the rear, acting as a support to some batteries of artillery. In Meade's division Seymour was in ad-

vance in front of the East Woods, with Magilton and Gallagher in support, though in a short time the latter's brigade was sent to the right to aid Doubleday. Duryea of Ricketts's division was nearest to Seymour, then came Hartsuff and Christian. To oppose this line the disposition of the Confederates was as follows: General Lee had been informed early in the afternoon of the 16th of McClellan's evident intention to attack his left, and to prepare for it Jackson was sent with the two divisions of J. R. Jones and Ewell to continue the Confederate line to the left of Hood, and with the latter's two brigades oppose Hooker's advance. By six o'clock in the afternoon of the 16th these troops were in position, and the Confederate left was formed, first of Stuart, with Fitzhugh Lee's brigade of cavalry and Early's brigade of infantry supporting Stuart's horse and several other batteries of artillery, fourteen guns in all, on Nicodemus's Hill, and having Hays's brigade within close reach to the right and rear; then Jones's division, with Jones's and Winder's brigades in the first line in advance of the West Woods, and Taliaferro's and Starke's in the second line, under cover of the woods; then next on the right came Hood's two brigades, which joined the brigades of Ripley, Colquitt, Garland, and G. B. Anderson of D. H. Hill's division. During the night Hood's two brigades were withdrawn and their places taken by Lawton's and Trimble's brigades of Ewell's division, which had been posted in the woods near the Dunker Church. This was for the purpose of enabling Hood's troops to get some rest and food, and was accomplished by 11 P. M.

Hidden in the East and West Woods and in the intervening cornfield were thus emplaced ten brigades of the best and bravest troops of the Confederate army, against whom Hooker opened a direct frontal attack. For nearly three hours the struggle was continued, attended with terrible losses on both sides, but by that time Hooker's repulse had been accomplished. On the Union right Doubleday's division drove back Jones's division to his second line, but was himself afterward

compelled to fall back. Meade, in the center, drove Lawton's and Trimble's brigades, which had been re-enforced by Hays's, out of the cornfield, while Ricketts's, on the left, pushing forward Hartsuff with Duryea's and Christian's brigades in support, met in conflict the brigades of Ripley, Colquitt, and Garland. Lawton, also in the cornfield, had been obliged to call for the speedy help of Hood's two brigades from the Dunker Church, while Early was ordered to bring his brigade from the extreme left to aid Lawton's division and to take command of it, Lawton having been severely wounded. The timely arrival of Hood's brigade and the assistance that D. H. Hill's brigades on his right afforded, compelled Meade and Ricketts to retire, the former to the northward and the latter to the eastern edge of the East Woods.

No sooner did Mansfield hear the opening of the battle at daylight on the 17th than orders were issued for the forward movement of his corps by battalions closed in mass. But so hastily was the movement made that sufficient distance had not been preserved for prompt deployment, and there was some delay, especially on the part of the five new regiments of the first division, before his line of battle could be formed. While the deployment was being made Mansfield was mortally wounded, and the command of the corps devolved upon General Williams, who, getting such hasty information of the situation as he could, learned that the whole of Hooker's corps was engaged and in desperate need of assistance. He sent Crawford's brigade to the right, its right to rest on the Hagerstown pike, keeping Gordon's brigade in the center, while Greene's division of three brigades was directed to extend the line from the left of Gordon. In response to the earnest call for support from Gibbon, Goodrich's brigade was detached from Greene and ordered to the right to support Doubleday. This strengthening of Hooker's harassed line was accomplished between half past seven and eight o'clock, and for a time stopped the onset of the Confederates on their left, and both of the contest-

ants on this part of the field were content to hold their own, as neither was in a condition to advance. East of the turnpike from Miller's house around to Mume's, the latter being then in flames, a part of Crawford's brigade, supported by Gordon's, brought timely assistance to the remnants of Meade's division and Duryea's brigade, which were resisting the furious onslaught of Hood, who by reason of this assistance was finally driven back from the East Woods across the already bloody cornfield, until his troops found shelter in the woods near the Dunker Church.

Greene, with his two remaining brigades, passing through the southern portion of the East Woods, came in contact with Ripley and Colquitt, who had followed Ricketts into these woods. Pressing them steadily back and driving in disorder Garland's brigade that had been sent to their assistance, Greene, handling his weakened division with skill and great gallantry, made a lodgment in the West Woods just north of the church, where he remained until after twelve o'clock, despite the efforts of the enemy to drive him back. At the end of this phase of the battle the opposing forces were thus positioned: Stuart, on the extreme Confederate left, had withdrawn a short distance from his first position without yielding the advantage of his position, but Early, after assigning a single regiment for his support, was hastening to support Lawton's division. Jackson had suffered great losses and had been forced back to the western border of the West Woods, occupying the strong defensive position behind the rocky ledges that ran parallel to the turnpike, where his troops were amply covered from infantry and artillery fire; Hood's weakened brigades were also in the woods near the church, and the only troops that had been unengaged on the Confederate left was Early's brigade, then hastening from Stuart's position to aid Jones and Lawton. The Union troops held possession of everything east of the pike, from Miller's farm on the north to the Dunker Church, but the aggressiveness of the two corps that had been engaged was

entirely gone and only their fragments were holding on, eagerly awaiting the arrival of Sumner's corps, then near at hand; while, on the other hand, Lee was hastening to his endangered left the commands of Walker and McLaws.

We have seen that Sumner's advance was unfortunately delayed until he received his orders at headquarters at twenty minutes past seven o'clock, and it was therefore not until nine o'clock that his leading division advanced to the attack from the East Woods. This was Sedgwick's, and, led by Sumner, it moved forward in three lines in close formation with brigade front, both flanks practically in the air and unprotected. As it moved forward most of Hooker's and Williams's corps that held on to the Union lines drifted away, except Greene's two brigades on the left and a small fragment of Crawford's brigade on the right. Before being able to deploy in line of battle or to make provision for the protection of his flanks, Sumner, confident in his ability to sweep the enemy from his front, and entirely unacquainted with the difficulties that confronted him, first met resistance from Jones's and Elwell's divisions in his front, while his exposed left flank was assailed by the fresh troops brought up by McLaws and Walker. With his brigades too close to each other to allow of deployment or to enable him to meet this attack on his left flank, which attack soon enveloped his rear, a short time only was necessary to send this splendid division, defeated, to the rear without its having been able to exact a fair exchange from its antagonist. Thus, thanks to Sumner's impetuosity, faulty tactical arrangement, and the very opportune arrival of the Confederate re-enforcements, this veteran division of the Sixth Corps suffered a most disastrous repulse. French's division of Sumner's corps, which should have been on Sedgwick's left flank, had been diverged too far to the left, and came into action after Sedgwick had been defeated; while Richardson's division, detained by headquarters' orders to await the arrival of Morell's division, was an hour

later in starting, and it also was moved to the left of French. The important success of the Confederate left, under Jackson's command, had thus put *hors de combat* two entire corps and one division of the Army of the Potomac before the mid-forenoon, and although it had suffered fearfully in killed and wounded, it had experienced no loss of morale. On the other hand, the organization of the Union troops for any continuance of offensive operations was for the time being completely destroyed and the losses greatly in excess of those of their antagonist, and had not their artillery been so admirably served and courageously handled the whole Union right would most likely have been forced from the field in panic and rout. Fortunately, however, for the Union side, Smith's division of the Sixth Corps had reached Keedysville by ten o'clock and was shortly afterward ordered to the right to support Sedgwick, just at the time when the latter's division was being driven from the field and the Confederate advance was on the point of seizing two of Sumner's batteries. Deploying Hancock's brigade and placing three batteries in its front, Smith, with the assistance of the Twentieth Massachusetts of Sumner's command, succeeded in checking the Confederate advance. Irwin's brigade, coming up later, formed on the left of Hancock, and Brooks's brigade, first sent to Sumner's right, but without the knowledge of the division commander, was very soon sent to French's support, taking position to the left of Irwin.

The next phase of the battle, which, however, in part overlapped the contest against the Confederate left, is that which occurred at the "Bloody Lane." French's division of Sumner's corps had followed Sedgwick's, but, as has been stated, diverged too much to the left to afford any support to Sedgwick, after the latter had advanced westward from the East Woods. Coming into contact with the Confederate pickets in the vicinity of Roulette's house, French formed his division with brigade front into three lines of battle, Weber in advance followed by Morris, and then Kimball.

Weber's right was soon struck by Manning's brigade, which had come from the south end of the West Woods, in a direction perpendicular to the Hagerstown pike, and was thrown into confusion, suffering great loss. Strengthening his line with his other two brigades, Manning was driven back on the right, but G. B. Anderson's and Rodes's brigades, in a measure protected by the cover of the sunken road, held French in check, and a stubborn but ineffectual contest was carried on for over three hours, during which time French suffered severely. Richardson's division of Sumner's corps, detained an hour after French's crossing, followed French's route and came up on his left, coming in conflict with D. H. Hill's division of five brigades, now re-enforced by R. H. Anderson's division with five additional brigades. The contest that ensued was long continued, considering the losses suffered by both sides, with a result more favorable to the Union forces than to the Confederates, and had McClellan put in his reserves across the Boonsborough Bridge at the time when McLaws was pushing Sedgwick back, there is every reason to suppose that he would have achieved a great victory. Serious fighting, so far as the infantry was concerned, ended on this part of the field by one o'clock. The fighting had been marked by successive attacks, first by French, then by Richardson, followed by that of Irwin's brigade of Smith's division, and while the losses experienced by the Confederates were enormous, the integrity of Lee's line was maintained.

With regard to Burnside's attack there has been much controversy. The well-established facts are, however, these: On the advance from Washington and until after the battle of South Mountain at Turner's Gap on the 14th, Burnside was in command of the right wing, comprising the First and Ninth Corps. So slow was he in taking up the advance on the 15th that McClellan expressed his dissatisfaction, and asked for an explanation of his delay. Whatever may have been the real cause, Hooker was practically detached from Burnside's immediate control and his corps was placed

on the right of the army, while Burnside, with the Ninth Corps, commanded by Cox, was sent to the left of the army. During the operations of the 17th Burnside, although present, took no active personal direction of the movements of the Ninth Corps, contenting himself with transmitting such orders as he received to General Cox, who had succeeded General Reno in command. McClellan had himself visited the position occupied by Burnside's troops on the afternoon of the 16th, and had indicated the changes he desired to have made in order that no unnecessary delay should occur the next morning in case a passage of the creek was ordered. The Ninth Corps comprised four divisions, aggregating about eleven thousand effectives, which certainly, if vigorously handled, would have been able to make a prompt crossing whatever the difficulties may have been that confronted it.

There are great discrepancies as to the hour Burnside was ordered to attack. Cox reports that at about seven o'clock he received orders from Burnside "to move forward the corps to the ridge nearest the Antietam, and hold it, in readiness to cross the stream, carrying the bridge and the heights above it by assault." He also states in his official report, "About nine o'clock the order was received to cross the stream," but Burnside in his report puts the time of receiving this order an hour later; and Cox, in a very able review of the battle written years afterward, finds ample reason to concur with Burnside, and adduces as confirming evidence the fact that McClellan in his first preliminary report, dated October 15th, states that the order to Burnside to attack was communicated to him at ten o'clock A. M. The order written by McClellan's aid, Colonel Ruggles, at 9.10 A. M., bears the evident marks of a first order to attack, and it may be either that borne by Colonel Sackett, reaching Burnside about ten o'clock, or a similar one. It is: "General Franklin's command is within one mile and a half of here. General McClellan desires you to open your attack. As soon as you shall have uncov-

ered the upper Stone Bridge you will be supported, and, if necessary, on your own line of attack. So far all is going well." On the other hand, the diary of the officer, Lieutenant John M. Wilson, of the Topographical Engineers, who carried the first order, marks the hour when he received it as 8 A. M., and he carried it immediately to Burnside within fifteen minutes.

Certainly even at the latest time when active efforts were first inaugurated to carry the crossing, the force of the enemy defending the passage had been so reduced by the withdrawal of Walker's division that Toombs had not more than four hundred and three infantrymen to resist the crossing, and, as was afterward ascertained, a passable ford existed a short distance above the bridge, which was crossed by five companies of Crook's brigade. Repeated and urgent orders followed in rapid succession for Burnside to carry the crossing at all hazards, for by this time McClellan was aware of the serious check that his right had experienced, but the passage was not effected until one o'clock. Two hours then elapsed before the Ninth Corps was moved forward to attack the Confederate right, which, though at first successful, was finally checked and driven back to the vicinity of the bridge by the arrival of A. P. Hill's five brigades, coming opportunely from Harper's Ferry by way of Shepherdstown, to aid D. R. Jones's and Toombs's commands at a critical time.

About the middle of the afternoon McClellan went to the right to confer with his commanders on that part of the field and determine upon a course of action. He found the aspect of affairs exceedingly unpromising, and was informed that the losses of the three corps that had been engaged there were very serious, so that he felt obliged to detach two of Porter's brigades from the center to re-enforce the right, which, however, were ordered back before reaching their destination, their assistance being afterward found not to be necessary. Porter's reserve furnished also six battalions of Sykes's regulars, who were pushed across

Bridge No. 2 to cover Pleasanton's horse batteries, and Warren's small brigade was sent to the right and rear of Burnside to support the latter. This depletion of the reserve left but about four thousand troops to cover the supply and ammunition trains of the army, and its employment as an aggressive force to attack the enemy's center was never contemplated after Hooker's defeat in the morning. While Franklin was in favor of again attacking after the arrival of his corps, Sumner was strongly opposed to it, and McClellan finally decided to hold the position his troops had gained on the right, and no further attack was made on this part of the field. Burnside's fight was then going on, and after he was driven back to the banks of the Antietam this sanguinary battle ended with the coming darkness.

The night of the 17th was spent by McClellan in anxious deliberation as to what should be done on the morrow, with the result that he came to the conclusion that, should he attack, success was not certain. By waiting till the 19th Humphreys's division of fourteen thousand men, mainly new troops, would be up, and he hoped for accessions from Pennsylvania; his army could in the meantime be refreshed and recuperated, his long-ranged batteries supplied with ammunition, and his infantry recover their morale, supposed at that time to be seriously affected. Doubtless he was also still under the conviction that Lee had a strength equal to his own, and he feared, should the battle go against him, the enemy would have a free path to invade Pennsylvania or make Baltimore or Washington an easily acquired objective. The 18th was therefore spent by both contestants in recuperation, and by the tacit consent of both parties in a sort of informal truce while the dead were buried and the wounded cared for.

During the night of the 18th Lee retreated across the Potomac without loss or pressure from McClellan, and his invasion of Maryland was brought to a close. His campaign had been marked by more than ordi-

nary boldness, and although he had inflicted greater losses upon his enemy than he himself had suffered, it is nevertheless true that the Confederate cause had lost in all save prestige, valor, and endurance of its troops more than it gained. In the campaign Lee's army had lost nearly fourteen thousand men in killed, wounded, and missing, according to the somewhat unsatisfactory Confederate accounts, of which over eleven thousand occurred at the battle of Antietam. Its endurance had been severely taxed, and although some of its indomitable leaders, notably Jackson, believed that it could even yet be subjected to more extraordinary efforts, Lee very wisely withdrew to the Shenandoah Valley for recuperation and reorganization, and to strengthen his army by gathering in the stragglers and recruits that were on their way to join.

It is now quite well established that the strength of Lee's army at Antietam was about forty thousand men, while McClellan's numbered eighty-seven thousand one hundred and sixty-four, or more than double Lee's. With such disproportional numbers it would have seemed the height of folly for Lee to determine to accept battle at Sharpsburg, and more especially when his determination was made on the afternoon of the 15th, when the greater portion of his army was not up and the greater Army of the Potomac was within a day's march of his position. Upon such an unqualified statement of relative strength and position it seems almost inconceivable that McClellan should not have captured or destroyed Lee's army, the latter having its back against a river unfordable except at one point. But now that the existing conditions are well known the results that followed from them can be logically accounted for.

In the first place, McClellan greatly overestimated the strength of his enemy, having expressed his belief, in his communications with Halleck, that Lee had over one hundred and twenty thousand men. This will, in a measure, account for his cautious forward movements in pursuit. But when Order No. 191 came into

his possession at noon of the 13th of September, giving the organization of Lee's army and its distribution, it would seem that a simple study of it by any member of his military staff should have disabused his mind of this egregious error. Secondly, without again referring to the slowness of his concentration before and after the battle of the passes in the South Mountains, it is difficult to account for the mental defects by which he gave Lee, on the afternoon of the 16th, positive information of his intention to attack by his right hours before the battle could possibly be opened. Third, his failure to digest thoroughly a feasible plan of attack in the thirty-six hours that elapsed from the time he found Lee in position until Hooker opened battle is entirely inexplicable; and so is the fact that he could have been content with so indefinite and tentative a plan as was afterward evolved, a plan characterized by the absence of any intelligent direction of a master mind during its progress. The consequences of such misdirection in handling the forces that he had at command were, first, to send Hooker's corps against an enemy prepared to meet it, whose strength, though numerically somewhat less, was more than made equal by reason of the defensive character of the position which they occupied. It was not until the Twelfth Corps had come up that the superiority on the Union side, so far as the number of troops engaged is concerned, was established, but to offset this their tactical formation was so faulty, due to the haste of their arrival and the rawness of a portion of its first division, that they did not bring the accession of strength which their numbers would indicate. Besides, while their orders were to support Hooker, the command was really lodged in Sumner. Again, the delay of Sumner's attack was entirely the fault of some one at headquarters, and in addition to the great blunder he committed in so openly exposing his left flank, already commented upon, he was firmly convinced that there were no Union troops on the field when he crossed over to the West Woods, and concluded that both Hooker's and

Williams's corps had been driven, entirely disorganized, from the field. It was on account of this belief, which he communicated to McClellan, that he was so opposed to further aggressive efforts on the Union right that day.

These successive attacks were met with exceptional courage and wonderful endurance by Jackson's sturdy veterans, assisted by those of D. H. Hill, Walker, and McLaws, as their tremendous losses testify, and while nearly every brigade in the Confederate army present on the field of battle was almost continuously engaged, the several Union divisions were expending their efforts separately and successively. The fighting at the center in front of Roulette's and the "Bloody Lane" was desperate, but could have no adequate result commensurate with the losses it entailed on the Union side unless its fruits were to be gathered by an advance of the reserves at an opportune time, but this we know was not contemplated at the time. Of Burnside's attempt it is impossible to speak without feeling, not only because of its dilatory performance but because its tactical failure to provide against the disaster that came to the exposed left flank. That McClellan was conscious of Burnside's limitations as a general he makes evident in a home letter, written on the afternoon of the 29th, in which he thus characterizes him: "I ought to treat Burnside *very* severely, and probably will; yet I hate to do it. He is very slow; is not fit to command more than a regiment. If I treat him as he deserves he will be my mortal enemy hereafter. If I do not praise him as he thinks he deserves, and as I know he does not, he will be at least a very lukewarm friend."

It is difficult to analyze satisfactorily McClellan's mental constitution in accepting the judgment of his friends with regard to this battle. "Those in whose judgment I rely," says he, "tell me that I fought the battle splendidly and that it was a masterpiece of art." It does not seem possible to find any other battle ever fought in the conduct of which more errors were com-

mitted than are clearly attributable to the commander of the Army of the Potomac; and in this, the only battle in which throughout the whole of his career as a commander it may be said that he exercised personal direction, it can not with justice be held that he displayed those rare qualities that belong *per se* to the few men that are entitled to be called great commanders. "Our victory," says he on the 20th, "was complete, and the disorganized rebel army has rapidly returned to Virginia, its dreams of 'invading Pennsylvania' dissipated forever. I feel some little pride in having, with a beaten and demoralized army, defeated Lee so utterly and saved the North so completely."

If this were the expression of his deliberate judgment, and not the mere ebullition of his emotional nature reacting from the intense anxiety he experienced on the day of battle, nothing should have prevented him from immediately organizing pursuit while the "rebel army was disorganized." Couch's division had joined him on the morning of the 18th, and Humphreys's division of new troops, marching from Frederick at 3.30 P. M. on the 17th, marched all night, and was available on the 18th. With these accessions he made his dispositions to renew the attack on the 19th, but then found that Lee had recrossed the Potomac and interposed this river as a barrier between the two armies.

A reconnoissance in force was pushed across the river on the 20th, under the direction of General Porter, which, achieving at first some success, was finally withdrawn with considerable loss, having come into contact with A. P. Hill's division. From this time McClellan gave up all intention of measuring his strength with his adversary until he could reorganize, re-equip, and discipline his army. He apprehended that Lee would seek to re-enter Maryland, and by the 23d of September so far was he from considering that the Confederate army was disorganized, that he telegraphed Halleck that the enemy were receiving such accessions of strength that, while Harper's Ferry was occupied by

Sumner with his own and Williams's corps, he thought Sumner would be able to hold the position till re-enforcements should arrive. And on the 27th he expressed the opinion "that the army was not then in a condition to undertake another campaign nor to bring on another battle, unless great advantages are offered by some mistake of the enemy, or pressing military exigencies render it necessary." He announced as his purpose to hold the army in such a position that he could watch the various crossings of the Potomac, rendering Harper's Ferry secure, intending to use it as a *débouché* to move upon Winchester when the river rose to such a degree as to make it hazardous for Lee to attempt an invasion of Maryland, or to move himself upon some other line as circumstances might justify. In the meantime he proposed to equip, organize, and discipline his army to prepare for the campaign, and asked for all the re-enforcements that the Government could supply.

This cautious policy caused the authorities at Washington to apprehend that the good weather favorable for campaigning would pass before McClellan would be ready to move, and that there would be a repetition of the experiences of the fall of 1861. To satisfy himself of the exact conditions Mr. Lincoln determined to visit the army, and on the 1st of October he was received with appropriate ceremonies by the commander of the Army of the Potomac, and remained with the army several days. Shortly after his return to Washington Halleck sent McClellan the order of October 6th, which evidently embodied the results of his observations and the conclusions at which he had arrived from all that came under his notice. It was as follows: "The President directs that you cross the Potomac and give battle to the enemy or drive him south. Your army must move now while the roads are good. If you cross the river between the enemy and Washington, and cover the latter by your operation, you can be re-enforced with thirty thousand men. If you move up the Valley of the Shenandoah, not more

than twelve thousand or fifteen thousand can be sent to you. The President advises the interior line between Washington and the enemy, but does not order it. He is very desirous that your army move as soon as possible. You will immediately report what line you adopt and when you intend to cross the river; also to what point the re-enforcements are to be sent. It is necessary that the plan of your operations be positively determined on before orders are given for building bridges and repairing railroads. I am directed to add that the Secretary of War and the general in chief fully concur with the President in these instructions."

This order was received by McClellan on the 7th and could not be disregarded, nor was there any disposition on his part to do so, but there were indispensable supplies of clothing and other necessaries needed to equip the army for an advance, and upon consultation with his chief quartermaster it was expected that three days would be sufficient to supply these deficiencies, as well as to remount his cavalry, which at the time was in a very sad state of inefficiency. Delays in transportation of the supplies asked for intervened arising from various causes, and it was not until about October 22d that these supplies and remounts began to arrive in sufficient abundance to warrant the issuance of instructions for the contemplated movement. But during this delay the impression grew in Washington that McClellan was again afflicted with the "slows" or that he intended to delay so long that the inclement weather would intervene to forbid any active campaign in the fall. As a preliminary to the crystallization in the mind of Mr. Lincoln of the decision to remove McClellan from the command of the Army of the Potomac, the answer of the latter to the order of October 6th, and Mr. Lincoln's critical response a week afterward, have an important bearing. McClellan, addressing Halleck, says:* "After a full consulta-

* Official War Records, vol. xix, part i, p. 11.

tion with the corps commanders in my vicinity, I have determined to adopt the line of the Shenandoah for immediate operations against the enemy, now near Winchester. On no other line north of Washington can the army be supplied, nor can it on any other cover Maryland and Pennsylvania. Were we to cross the river below the mouth of the Shenandoah, we would leave it in the power of the enemy to recross into Maryland, and thus check the movements. In the same case we would voluntarily give him the advantage of the strong line of the Shenandoah, no point of which could be reached by us in advance of him. I see no objective point of strategical value to be gained or sought for by a movement between the Shenandoah and Washington. I wish to state distinctly that I do not regard the line of the Shenandoah Valley as important for ulterior objects. It is important only so long as the enemy remains near Winchester, and we can not follow that line far beyond that point simply because the country is destitute of supplies, and we have not sufficient means of transportation to enable us to advance more than twenty or twenty-five miles beyond a railway or canal terminus. If the enemy abandon Winchester and fall back upon Staunton, it will be impossible for us to pursue him by that route, and we must then take a new line of operations, based upon water or railway communication. The only possible object to be gained by an advance from this vicinity is to fight the enemy near Winchester. If they retreat we have nothing to gain by pursuing them; in fact, can not do so to any great distance. The objects I propose to myself are, to fight the enemy if they remain near Winchester, or, failing in that, to force them to abandon the Valley of the Shenandoah; then to adopt a new and decisive line of operations which shall strike at the heart of the rebellion.

"I have taken all possible measures to insure the most prompt equipment of the troops, but from all that I can learn it will be at least three days before the First, Fifth, and Sixth Corps are in condition to move

from their present camps. They need shoes and other indispensable articles of clothing, as well as shelter-tents, etc. I beg to assure you that not an hour shall be lost in carrying your instructions into effect. Please send the re-enforcements to Harper's Ferry. I would prefer that the new regiments be sent as regiments, not brigaded, unless already done so with old troops. I would again ask for Peck's division, and, if possible, Heintzelman's corps. If the enemy gives fight near Winchester it will be a desperate affair, requiring all our resources. I hope that no time will be lost in sending forward the re-enforcements, that I may get them in hand as soon as possible."

To which Mr. Lincoln replied:* "My dear Sir: You remember my speaking to you of what I called your overcautiousness. Are you not overcautious when you assume that you can not do what the enemy is constantly doing? Should you not claim to be at least his equal in prowess, and act upon the claim? As I understand, you telegraphed General Halleck that you can not subsist your army at Winchester unless the railroad from Harper's Ferry to that point be put in working order. But the enemy does now subsist his army at Winchester, at a distance nearly twice as great from railroad transportation as you would have to do, without the railroad last named. He now wagons from Culpeper Court House, which is just about twice as far as you would have to do from Harper's Ferry. He is certainly not more than half as well provided with wagons as you are. I certainly should be pleased for you to have the advantage of the railroad from Harper's Ferry to Winchester, but it wastes all the remainder of autumn to give it to you, and in fact ignores the question of time, which can not and must not be ignored. Again, one of the standard maxims of war, as you know, is to 'operate upon the enemy's communications as much as possible without exposing your own.' You seem to act as if this

* Official War Records, vol. xix, part i, p. 13.

applies against you, but can not apply in your favor. Change positions with the enemy, and think you not he would break your communication with Richmond within the next twenty-four hours? You dread his going into Pennsylvania, but if he does so in full force he gives up his communications to you absolutely, and you have nothing to do but follow and ruin him. If he does so with less than full force, fall upon and beat what is left behind all the easier. Exclusive of the water line you are now nearer Richmond than the enemy is by the route that you can and he must take. Why can you not reach there before him, unless you admit that he is more than your equal on a march? His route is the arc of a circle, while yours is the chord. The roads are as good on yours as on his. You know I desired but did not order you to cross the Potomac below instead of above the Shenandoah and Blue Ridge. My idea was that this would at once menace the enemy's communications, which I would seize if he would permit.

"If he should move northward I would follow him closely, holding his communications. If he should prevent our seizing his communications and move toward Richmond, I would press closely to him; fight him, if a favorable opportunity should present, and at least try to beat him to Richmond on the inside track. I say 'try'; if we never try we shall never succeed. If he makes a stand at Winchester, moving neither north nor south, I would fight him there, on the idea that if we can not beat him when he bears the wastage of coming to us, we never can when we bear the wastage of going to him. This proposition is a simple truth, and is too important to be lost sight of for a moment. In coming to us he tenders us an advantage which we should not waive. We should not so operate as to merely drive him away. As we must beat him somewhere or fail finally, we can do it, if at all, easier near to us than far away. If we can not beat the enemy where he now is, we never can, he again being within the intrenchments of Richmond.

"Recurring to the idea of going to Richmond on the inside track, the facility of supplying from the side away from the enemy is remarkable—as it were by the different spokes of a wheel, extending from the hub toward the rim, and this whether you move directly by the chord or on the inside arc, hugging the Blue Ridge more closely. The chord line, as you see, carries you by Aldie, Hay Market, and Fredericksburg; and you see how turnpikes, railroads, and finally the Potomac, by Aquia Creek, meet you at all points from Washington; the same, only the lines lengthened a little, if you press closer to the Blue Ridge part of the way.

"The gaps through the Blue Ridge I understand to be about the following distances from Harper's Ferry, to wit: Vestal's, five miles; Gregory's, thirteen; Snicker's, eighteen; Ashby's, twenty-eight; Manassas, thirty-eight; Chester, forty-five; and Thornton's, fifty-three. I should think it preferable to take the route nearest the enemy, disabling him to make an important move without your knowledge, and compelling him to keep his forces together for dread of you. The gaps would enable you to attack if you should wish. For a great part of the way you would be practically between the enemy and both Washington and Richmond, enabling us to spare you the greatest number of troops from here. When at length running for Richmond ahead of him enables him to move this way, if he does so, turn and attack him in the rear. But I think he should be engaged long before such point is reached. It is all easy if our troops march as well as the enemy, and it is unmanly to say they can not do it. This letter is in no sense an order."

To understand McClellan's frame of mind at this time it is necessary to consider the problem as he understood it. During the early part of October the Potomac was low and presented no serious obstacle for the passage of Lee's army into Maryland, and McClellan constantly had in mind this possibility on the part of Lee. He therefore had all the possible crossings watched, and distributed the principal fractions of

his army for rapid and easy concentration to meet such a contingency. Had his army received the supplies that he deemed necessary for an advance by the early part of the month, it was his intention to direct it against Winchester and endeavor to bring Lee to battle. But by the time that his supplies were beginning to arrive in sufficient quantities the season in which heavy rains would be likely to make the Potomac a serious obstacle against the invasion of Maryland had arrived, and he determined to adopt the interior line between the Blue Ridge and the Potomac for his advance, which would enable him to supply his army from Harper's Ferry and Berlin until he reached the Manassas Gap Railroad. He also deemed it necessary to leave a considerable force to guard the Potomac and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad while this movement was in progress. This line of operations was that suggested by the President, and McClellan's change to it, while no doubt gratifying, may possibly have also had the effect of strengthening the belief in Washington that McClellan's conduct of affairs was both irresolute and indecisive.

This lack of confidence in McClellan's leadership was further accentuated by the success which attended the raid conducted by that bold and venturesome Confederate cavalry leader, General J. E. B. Stuart, who a second time made a complete circuit around the rear of the Army of the Potomac and escaped without loss or disaster, after causing considerable destruction of Government stores at Chambersburg in Pennsylvania. All the available cavalry were sent in pursuit or to intercept Stuart, and explicit orders were sent to the commanding officers of troops near the point where Stuart was likely to recross the Potomac in the expectation that he would be destroyed. But unfortunately disease and overwork had at this time broken down much of McClellan's cavalry, and a great portion was distributed over a long line on outpost service, while the orders for the disposition of the two brigades at the Monocacy crossing to intercept Stuart were not carried out.

The Army of the Potomac began its movement south on the 26th of October by the crossing of two divisions of the Ninth Corps and Pleasonton's brigade of cavalry at Berlin and the occupation of Lovettsville. By the 2d of November the whole army was across and well on its way toward Warrenton, which was made the directing point for the advance, seizing in succession the several passes of the Blue Ridge as it advanced, and its fractions being held within supporting distance so that it could readily be concentrated for battle. During this movement Lee separated Longstreet and Jackson, the latter remaining in the lower Shenandoah Valley, while the former, emerging from it at Front Royal, kept his outposts in contact with the advance of the Union army, while with his main body he covered Culpeper and Gordonsville. By this disposition, although Jackson was ultimately separated more than forty miles from Longstreet, he had a secure route up the Valley by which he could make junction with Longstreet unless McClellan by a rapid movement should be able to intercept him, and at the same time had a position from which, by forcing a gap of the Blue Ridge, he might threaten McClellan's communications should the latter advance sufficiently far in pursuit of Longstreet. It was by such bold and apparently hazardous dispositions that Lee, relying on the resisting power of Longstreet and Jackson's celerity of movement and aggressiveness, hoped to discomfit his cautious and slow-moving adversary.

On the 7th of November the Army of the Potomac was thus situated: The First, Second, and Fifth Corps, reserve artillery and general headquarters, at Warrenton; the Ninth Corps on the line of the Rappahannock in the vicinity of Waterloo; the Sixth Corps at New Baltimore; the Eleventh Corps (which, under Sigel's command, had joined the army from the defenses of Washington) at New Baltimore, Gainesville, and Thoroughfare Gap; Sickles's division (also from Washington) of the Third Corps from Manassas Junc-

tion to Warrenton Junction on the railroad; Pleasonton's cavalry command at Amissville, and Jefferson with his pickets at Hazel River, six miles from Culpeper, facing Longstreet; Bayard, with a brigade of cavalry, near Rappahannock Station. The army was thus massed near Warrenton, and, according to McClellan's own opinion, perfectly in hand, ready to act in any required direction, and in admirable condition and spirits.

It would be futile to conjecture what might have happened had McClellan been continued in command of the Army of the Potomac until the close of the campaigning season. Notwithstanding the fact that he had a concentrated army in the vicinity of Warrenton, his alert adversary had as yet not yielded to him any advantage as to the military situation that he might not with boldness more than recover. For though the two wings of Lee's army were so far separated as to distance, the roads flanking the Massanutten Mountains in the upper Shenandoah Valley, with the passage through the Blue Ridge at Swift Run Gap, would have enabled Jackson to unite with Longstreet, while the latter could offer sufficient resisting power in falling back to enable Lee to select his own battlefield, where with his combined forces he could offer defensive battle with his base at Staunton. This issue was, however, not then to be tried, for late in the evening McClellan received the order relieving him from command of the Army of the Potomac, and directing him to turn it over to his successor, General Burnside. This act, when completed, terminated his career as a military commander.

This action on the part of the Administration, though unexpected, was not wholly unforeseen by McClellan. He had almost ever since the battle of Antietam felt that he was misjudged and out of sympathy with the President and the general in chief; and as for the Secretary, ever since the 2d of September there had been no correspondence whatever of a personal character, while that of an official nature had been

rigidly formal. During the march from the Potomac he had taken especial pains to keep Burnside near him and to inform him of the daily movements of the corps of the army, so that he would be able to continue the administration should it become necessary. He had also on the morning of the 7th heard of the coming of the special train bearing General Buckingham, the adjutant general of the Secretary, and suspected his mission. He was not, therefore, overmuch surprised when the message of his relief was handed to him, although it was the severest blow that his *amour propre* could possibly receive. However, he accepted it like a good and faithful soldier, a loyal patriot, and a Christian gentleman, for he was ever all of these; and while possibly many intemperate expressions were indulged in by hot-headed partisans, and much sincere grief and distress were felt throughout the army, nothing happened to bring discredit upon it, or to sully its devoted loyalty to the cause for which it had been called into being. In bidding farewell to the army he thus addressed them:

Officers and Soldiers of the Army of the Potomac:

An order of the President devolves upon Major-General Burnside the command of this army. In parting from you I can not express the love and gratitude I bear to you. As an army you have grown up under my care. In you I have never found doubt or coldness. The battles you have fought under my command will proudly live in our nation's history. The glory you have achieved, our mutual perils and fatigues, the graves of our comrades fallen in battle and by disease, the broken forms of those whom wounds and sickness have disabled—the strongest associations which can exist among men—unite us still by an indissoluble tie. We shall ever be comrades in supporting the Constitution of our country and the nationality of its people.

It was very difficult to understand the causes that brought about the relief of McClellan at that particular time, when to all appearances he was in the prosecution of a campaign that offered more promise than any that he had heretofore undertaken, and it was not until long afterward that it was found to be the act of the Presi-

dent himself, in accord with a determination that he had reached and which is expressed in the language of his biographers as follows: "He began to think, before the end of October, that McClellan had no real desire to beat the enemy. He set in his own mind the limit of his forbearance. He adopted for his guidance a test, which he communicated to no one until long afterward, on which he determined to base his final judgment of McClellan. If he should permit Lee to cross the Blue Ridge and place himself between Richmond and the Army of the Potomac he would remove him from command. When it was reported at Washington that Lee and Longstreet were at Culpeper Court House, the President sent an order, dated the 5th of November, to General McClellan, which reached him at Rectortown on the 7th, directing him to report for further orders at Trenton, N. J., and to turn the command of the Army of the Potomac over to General Burnside."

An act so important as this, the relief of the commander of the Army of the Potomac at such a time, could scarcely be due alone to an emotional impulse on the part of the President, as stated above, but rather to a combination of many causes, all tending to culminate upon an inevitably approaching meridian. And it is only in a general way that the trend of these causes can be pointed out, so inextricably intermingled are the influences that control the leaders of men with those of the masses whom they lead and those who range themselves in antagonism. Upon Mr. Lincoln's shoulders was laid the heaviest burden ever borne by the lawful ruler of any nation, and "with charity toward all and malice toward none," he sought the help of Divine Providence to execute his mission with complete self-sacrifice, even to martyrdom, that the nation might be saved and liberty reign triumphant. By virtue of his office he was the commander in chief of the armed forces of the republic, and in the exercise of this function he sought able and efficient instruments to gain success in the field, so that he might be

able to fulfill the requirements of his oath of office as President over the whole of the national domain.

We have seen how fully he gave McClellan his confidence and support from the time of the latter's assignment to the command of the Army of the Potomac until the disaster at Ball's Bluff; then came admonitions to him in private to do something, while publicly he defended him from the criticisms that then began to be made; then during the Peninsular campaign the letters of friendly advice and gentle admonition, and even when the general in the bitterness of defeat had passionately charged the Administration with sacrificing "this army," he had forborne justly to rebuke this unwarranted lapse of soldierly conduct on the part of his subordinate, but told him that he did not expect impossibilities. The failure of the Peninsular campaign segregated the opponents of McClellan, who then gave voice to hostile criticism, to a denunciation of his military policy, and to a denial of his professional ability. These were followed by others, even men in high places, who should have known better, who sought to defame him by charging that he designedly delayed the withdrawal of his army from the Peninsula that his rival, General Pope, might suffer defeat: so that during the last days of August he had lost the support of every member of the Cabinet, the general in chief, and almost every influential man in Washington, and it may be said, even the confidence of Mr. Lincoln himself, so widely had the poison of unjustified detraction and suspicion been spread. That Mr. Lincoln believed that McClellan and some of his friends in the Army of the Potomac had failed in their duty owing to professional jealousy, is undoubtedly true, and it must ever be a sad reflection that he did not live to see the injustice of this belief. Though this may have had, and doubtless did have, its influence in disparaging McClellan, yet he desired above all things at this time military success. From every point of view it was absolutely essential, and believing that its possibility lay in McClellan's hands he again gave him

support, but almost at the cost of his own political fortunes. The long and to him inexplicable delay after the battle of Antietam,* and the evident purpose as interpreted by him that this delay was intended to last till the winter should come to prevent an advance, had full force in weakening his confidence. In addition to these things there was the fact that McClellan's adherents, as well as McClellan himself, were politically opposed to him and to the party that was aggressive in carrying on the war; this was made evident by McClellan's Harrison Bar letter and the tenor of his order to the army upon the emancipation proclamation, as well as the current rumors of the character and tone of what was said at McClellan's headquarters, all of which was not made less obnoxious in its transmission to the partisans of the Administration in Washington.

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* In an important letter, now before the writer, on the strategy of the approaching spring campaign, Henry W. Halleck, general in chief, writes to Grant, then in Nashville, Tenn., in February, 1864. "Lee's army is by far the best in the rebel service, and I regard him as their ablest general. But little progress can be made here till that army is broken or defeated. There have been several good opportunities to do this, viz., at Antietam, at Chancellorsville, and at Williamsport—in the retreat from Gettysburg. I am also of the opinion that General Meade could have succeeded recently at Mine Run, had he persevered in his attack."—EDITOR.

CHAPTER XV.

CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENCY.—GOVERNOR.—MILITARY AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS.

McClellan remained at the headquarters of the army for a few days to give such assistance to Burnside in taking over the command of the army as was necessary, conducting himself in this exceedingly delicate situation with his habitual courtesy and gentlemanly consideration toward his successor. In obedience to his instructions he then proceeded to Trenton to await the orders of the Government, and shortly afterward established his home at Orange, N. J., where for a time he was occupied in preparing his official report of the operations of the Army of the Potomac while under his command. As a major general of the regular army he was still subject for any military duty at the pleasure of the Government, and pending such assignment he remained unobtrusively at home, a loyal and subordinate soldier. Whatever hope he may have cherished in this interim that he would again be called upon to command one of the armies of his country, must have soon been dispelled by the fact that the Administration completely ignored his existence, even after the disasters of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville had demonstrated that his successors had been much more unsuccessful than he.

The gloomiest period of the war now began to overshadow the Administration, and to darken the hopes of those who were anxious for the success of the Union cause. From every quarter Confederate victories were reported, and there seemed to be no end to the reverses attending the Union arms. The Confederate

ranks appeared to be kept constantly full by their efficient conscription, and it was inevitable that the Administration must soon have recourse to the draft to repair the wastage of battle and disease, since the numbers volunteering for enlistment became about this time so small as to be alarming. Accordingly such an act was passed March 3, 1863, and while it accomplished its main purpose, it was accompanied by such opposition as to weaken the support of the Administration throughout the country. The results of the State elections in the fall of 1862 had indicated a lessened confidence in the Administration, attributable in part to the Emancipation Proclamation of Mr. Lincoln, and the same trend of changed public opinion was manifested in the spring elections of 1863 in New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. The opposition, thus gathering strength in numbers, gained confidence that the people were ready to change the Administration at the next presidential election, and its leaders began to scan the political horizon to discern the approach of that leader under whose banner success might be won.

Among military men, McClellan stood pre-eminently above all others as an available candidate of the Democratic party, and he was especially championed by those members of the party who advocated the prosecution of the war for the restoration of the Union as it was. Many of these still regarded him as a general of exceptional talent, whose plans would have been carried to a successful issue had they not been malevolently interfered with by the Secretary of War, upon whose shoulders they cast all the responsibility for every failure. They regarded McClellan's Harrison Bar letter as an able State paper, approved of the implied censure of the Administration embodied in the language of the order he issued to the army relating to Mr. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, and of the whole tenor of his conduct while in active command in opposition to the radical measures of both Cabinet and Congress. They believed, and with truth,

that he possessed the strongest affections of the soldiers of his army, but erroneously imagined that this bond could safely be counted upon to add the whole soldier vote to his strength at the polls. But in the ranks of the opposition there were also great numbers of "peace" men, who were antagonistic to the war upon every ground. They were in reality Southern sympathizers, rejoicing in every Confederate victory and cast down with every Union success; they discouraged enlistments, denounced the draft as unconstitutional, and seized upon every pretext to belittle and misjudge the acts and purposes of the Administration; in every possible indirect way they gave aid and comfort to the enemy. The arrest by military authority, and the trial and condemnation by a military court, of Clement L. Vallandigham, the most pronounced exemplar of these ultrapeace men, followed by the Executive order for his expulsion beyond the Union lines, aroused the utmost excitement as being an invasion of the right of habeas corpus, and furnished the opposition with abundant ammunition to assail the President and his administration.

The political canvass for the State election in Pennsylvania in the autumn of 1863 was very active, especially with regard to the candidates for the governorship. The Republican candidate, Andrew G. Curtin, was standing for re-election, seeking the suffrage of the electors on his record as war Governor. His competitor, Judge George W. Woodward, the Democratic candidate, was one of the justices of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, who held that the enrolling act was unconstitutional, and that the Federal Government had no power to recruit its armies otherwise than by voluntary enlistments. Up to this time General McClellan had refrained from publicly expressing any opinion with regard to State and National party politics, and although he probably very well knew that he could not much longer continue to maintain such an attitude, it was very distressing to many of his personal friends that his first public step into political life should have

been signalized by the letter he wrote October 12, 1863, to the Hon. Charles J. Biddle, in support of the candidacy of Judge Woodward. In it he says:

DEAR SIR: My attention has been called to an article in the Philadelphia Press asserting that I had written to the managers of a Democratic meeting at Allentown, disapproving the objects of the meeting, and that if I voted or spoke it would be in favor of Governor Curtin, and I am informed that similar assertions have been made throughout the State. It has been my earnest endeavor heretofore to avoid participation in party politics. I had determined to adhere to this course, but it is obvious that I can not longer maintain silence under such misrepresentations. I therefore request you to deny that I have written any such letter or entertained any such views as those attributed to me in the Philadelphia Press; and I desire to state clearly and distinctly that, having some days ago had a full conversation with Judge Woodward, I find that our views agree, and I regard his election as Governor of Pennsylvania called for by the interests of the nation.

I understand Judge Woodward to be in favor of the prosecution of the war with all the means at the command of the loyal States, until the military power of the rebellion is destroyed. I understand him to be of the opinion that, while the war is urged with all possible decision and energy, the policy directing it should be in consonance with the principles of humanity and civilization, working no injury to private rights and property not demanded by military necessity and recognized by military law among civilized nations. And, finally, I understand him to agree with me in the opinion that the sole great objects of this war are the restoration of the unity of the nation, the preservation of the Constitution, and the supremacy of the laws of the country. Believing our opinions entirely agree upon these points, I would, were it in my power, give to Judge Woodward my voice and vote.

Had McClellan been actuated alone by the very natural resentment arising in his mind from having erroneous views and intentions publicly attributed to him, he might well have been content with the simple denial embodied in the first part of his letter, and justified himself from proceeding further on the ground of his connection with the military service. By adding to his denial the remainder of his letter he actually placed himself in the political field as a possible presidential candidate in opposition to Mr. Lincoln, and it

was not long before this posture was distinctly recognized, not only by the political leaders of all the parties but by the people themselves.

The Union successes at Gettysburg and Vicksburg in July, 1863, marked the turn in the tide of battle, and justified the hope that the Confederate cause was perceptibly beginning to wane. But the period of reaction which set in after the failure of Grant to destroy Lee's army and capture Richmond in the summer of 1864 revived the hopes of the opposition for the coming political contest. They believed that the people were becoming disheartened by the tremendous losses in Virginia, which seemed to be attended with no adequate compensation. Public sentiment apparently was rapidly veering to a serious contemplation of the question whether it would not be justifiable to undertake negotiations for a peace of some kind with the Confederate authorities, and various abortive attempts of this kind were made. This feeling of general despondency prevailed about the time when the party conventions were due to nominate candidates for the fall election of 1864, and lasted nearly to the end of the summer. The first of these, that of the Radical Democracy, met at Cleveland, May 31st, and nominated General John C. Frémont as its candidate for the presidency; this was followed, June 7th, by the Republican Convention nominating Mr. Lincoln for a second term. The Democratic Convention, originally called to meet July 4th, postponed the day of meeting until August 29th, in the hope that circumstances might happen in the interim to increase the numbers of the disaffected and more certainly insure its success at the polls. When it met at Chicago at the appointed time its component elements were found to comprise many men of exceedingly diverse views, whose coalescence was a problem of great difficulty. Among these were peace men of the most pronounced type, rabid defamers of the actions of the President, strict constructionists of the Constitution, and all shades of War Democrats. The Committee on Resolutions, whose duty it was to formu-

late the platform upon which to wage the political battle, was captured by the ultrapeace men, and it was apparently their endeavor to construct such a platform that it would be impossible for any advocate of the war to stand upon it. Particularly obnoxious was the second resolution adopted by the convention, which was as follows:

"*Resolved*, That this convention does explicitly declare, as the sense of the American people, that, after four years of failure to restore the Union by the experiment of war, during which, under the pretense of a military necessity of a war power higher than the Constitution, the Constitution itself has been disregarded in every part, and public liberty and private right alike trodden down, and the material prosperity of the country essentially impaired, justice, humanity, liberty, and the public welfare demand that immediate efforts be made for a cessation of hostilities, with a view to an ultimate convention of all the States, or other peaceable means, to the end that, at the earliest practicable moment, peace may be restored on the basis of the Federal Union of the States."

Nevertheless, although the convention had been governed by the ultrapeace men in the construction of its platform, the War Democrats controlled its nomination for the presidency, and accordingly, as had been prearranged by them, General George B. McClellan was chosen on the first ballot as the nominee of the Democratic party.

The nomination and platform having thus such antagonistic sources for their origin seemed impossible of adjustment, for, in view of his record during the rebellion and his very recent expressions advocating the prosecution of the war, McClellan could not stand upon such a platform without the most complete stultification. This the ultrapeace men knew quite well, and they had hoped to see the prize bestowed upon one of themselves, whose views and utterances would be hampered by no such discrepancy. On the 15th of June, less than three months before this convention had

enunciated its platform, McClellan had delivered a finished oration at West Point before the officers and cadets of the Military Academy, at the dedication of a site upon which was to be erected a monument in memory of the officers and men of the regular army who had fallen in battle during the rebellion. In this carefully studied oration he gave expression to sentiments of that steadfast devotion to the Union and sturdy loyalty that were fundamentally antagonistic to the unpatriotic resolution above quoted. Among other things, he said:

"Rebellion against a government like ours, which contains the means of self-adjustment and a pacific remedy for evils, should never be confounded with a revolution against despotic power, which refuses redress of wrongs. Such a rebellion can not be justified upon ethical grounds, and the only alternative for our choice is its suppression or the destruction of our nationality. At such a time as this, and in such a struggle, political partisanship should be merged in a true and brave patriotism, which thinks only of the good of the whole country.

"It was in this cause and with these motives that so many of our comrades gave their lives; and to this we are all personally pledged in all honor and fidelity. Shall such a devotion as that of our dead comrades be of no avail? Shall it be said in after ages that we lacked the vigor to complete the work thus begun? that, after all these noble lives freely given, we hesitated, and failed to keep straight on until our land was saved? Forbid it, Heaven, and give us truer hearts than that!"

With such sentiments, so distinctly at variance with the platform of the party that had selected him as its standard bearer, it is impossible to offer a satisfactory explanation of his acceptance of the nomination. Possibly, through the influence of personal friends and by the urgent solicitation of political counsellors, he allowed himself to be forced into a position that was alike false to the inmost promptings of his heart and the dictates of his better judgment. He may have

hoped that in the event of success, which then appeared exceedingly probable, he would be able so to direct affairs with an almost imperial hand as to save the country as he thought it ought to be saved, guaranteeing the rights of the States in rebellion under the provisions of the Constitution. Though he never surrendered his conviction as to the necessity of a vigorous prosecution of the war until the last armed insurgent had surrendered to the constituted national authority, he was earnest in his desire that when this was accomplished nothing should have occurred in the meanwhile to prevent the re-establishment of fraternal relations between the two hostile sections of the country. Finally, the professional injustice to which he had been subjected by the Administration, not only by his relief from command but in his continued retirement, and which, in the opinion of his friends and himself, was due to political grounds alone, disseminated throughout his mind a sense of personal grievance whose active influence at this time can scarcely be ignored. Granting all these possible causes as influencing his decision toward the acceptance of the nomination, his innate convictions would not permit him to assent to the unequivocal language of the platform, and in his letter of acceptance, written September 8th, he endeavored to translate it into language of his own, which was, however, manifestly a forced and unnatural construction. In this he says:

"The Union was originally formed by the exercise of a spirit of conciliation and compromise. To restore and preserve it, the same spirit must prevail in our councils and in the hearts of the people. The re-establishment of the Union in all its integrity is and must continue to be the indispensable condition in any settlement. So soon as it is clear, or even probable, that our present adversaries are ready for peace upon the basis of the Union, we should exhaust all the resources of statesmanship practised by civilized nations and taught by the traditions of the American people, consistent with the honor and interests of the country,

to secure such peace, re-establish the Union, and guarantee for the future the constitutional rights of every State. The Union is the one condition of peace. We ask no more.

"Let me add what I doubt not was, although unexpressed, the sentiment of the convention, as it is of the people they represent: that, when any one State is willing to return to the Union, it should be received at once, with a full guarantee of all its constitutional rights. If a frank, earnest, and persistent effort to obtain these objects should fail, the responsibility for ulterior consequences will fall upon those who remain in arms against the Union; but the Union must be preserved at all hazards. I could not look in the face of my gallant comrades of the army and navy who have survived so many bloody battles, and tell them that their labors and the sacrifices of so many of our slain and wounded brethren had been in vain—that we had abandoned that Union for which we have so often periled our lives. A vast majority of our people, whether in the army and navy or at home, would, as *I* would, hail with unbounded joy the permanent restoration of peace on the basis of the Union under the Constitution, without the effusion of another drop of blood; but *no peace can be permanent without Union.*"

Sherman's capture of Atlanta, September 1st, and Sheridan's successful battles of the Opequan, September 19th, and Cedar Creek, October 19th, in the Shenandoah Valley successively added their powerful stimulus in bettering the political situation so far as the Administration was concerned, while the strength of the opposition, so threatening during the summer, now steadily declined. When the election was over it was found that McClellan had carried but three States—New Jersey, Delaware, and Kentucky—thus giving him but twenty-one votes in the Electoral College, while the remaining States declared for Mr. Lincoln, assuring him of two hundred and twelve electoral votes, and therefore of his triumphant election for another term.

McClellan resigned his commission as major general, United States Army, November 8, 1864, the day of the election. "For the sake of my country and my friends," says he in a personal letter, "I regret the result most deeply, yet so far as I am personally concerned I can not avoid a sense of relief from the knowledge of the fact that the awful responsibility of the fate of the country is not to be committed to me. As the result is I accept it as from the hand of God. I have sent in my resignation—written, as I had already determined, on the day of the election before I could know the result. I hope soon to hear that it is accepted, and shall then feel that I am once more a free man, free to consult my own feelings and no longer to be a target for the abuse of partisans. As to my own future I have not yet fully determined—that is, not further than that I have done with public life. As soon as the smoke clears away I shall make up my mind what to do. I shall begin life anew with hope and energy."

For a few months after his resignation from the army McClellan endeavored to find some employment in civil life that would fully occupy his time and be in accord with his tastes and talents, but he soon found that there was nothing immediately available that he could accept without trespassing upon the generosity of personal friendship and wounding his own innate delicacy of feeling. He therefore wisely determined to take his family abroad, and to remain there until time should moderate the generous efforts of his friends and soften the bitter animosities of his political opponents, when he might be able to return as a simple citizen, free to engage in whatever occupation might be most agreeable to him. Accordingly he sailed from home in January, 1865, and for a little over three years remained abroad enjoying the literature, art, and culture of Europe, which was all the more satisfactory since he knew that his own beloved land had successfully emerged from her long-continued struggle for existence, with its flag upheld and its honor unim-

paired. When he returned he found that he had not lost his place in the deep affections of his fellow-countrymen, for they everywhere greeted him with heartfelt expressions of joyous welcome and acclaim. He experienced with deep emotion the truth that the love and affection which he had for his soldiers was by reciprocity active and living in their hearts for their old commander, while the unnourished animosities had passed forever away into the region of forgetfulness.

Upon his return home in 1868 he was appointed engineer in charge of Stevens's battery, a steam war vessel which Mr. Edwin A. Stevens, a public-hearted citizen of Hoboken, N. J., had designed, intending to present it, when completed, to the State of New Jersey. For this purpose this gentleman had left by will one million dollars, together with the tools and machinery used in its construction, and previous to his decease had expressed his desire that McClellan should be appointed the engineer to assist in the proper method of completing the vessel. A special act of Congress was passed authorizing the State of New Jersey to accept the gift under the provisions of Mr. Stevens's will, and a commission was appointed by the State to represent it and to advise with the executors of the will during the construction of the vessel. It was the intention to make this the most formidable ironclad afloat at the time of its completion, and to this end McClellan and his assistants devoted their best thought and labor. But the amount of money appropriated proved insufficient to complete the vessel, and after the hull and machinery had been nearly finished the further progress of the work had to be abandoned. McClellan ceased his connection with this work in 1869, and while engaged upon it he had been offered the presidency of two institutions of learning—those of the University of California in 1868 and of Union College in 1869, both of which he declined.

In 1870 he was appointed chief engineer of the Department of Docks in the city of New York, which

position he filled with great credit to himself and with advantage to the city until 1872, when he terminated his relations with the city government, having also declined the appointment of Comptroller of the city, which had been offered to him September 16, 1871.

It only remains now to refer briefly to his career as Governor of the State of New Jersey, to which position he was elected as the Democratic candidate in the fall election of 1877, and which closed his public services in an official capacity. There is scarcely any doubt that he was selected as the nominee of the Democratic party owing to the great influence his name possessed among the people, and possibly without any hope that he would achieve any success in the line of what was commonly known as practical politics. Probably, so far as his own ambition was concerned, he may have had in view the natural desire and hope of higher political rewards in the future to justify the sacrifices he was called upon to make in once more entering the field of political warfare. Whatever may have been the designs of the political leaders in selecting him, the wisdom of their choice was verified by the success that attended his election.

At the time of his election the people throughout the country were but just recovering from the disastrous condition of affairs that had followed the panic of 1873, and the evidences of this recuperation were even then becoming manifest. As a consequence McClellan's attention throughout the whole period of his governorship was mainly directed to the advocacy of those measures that would advance the material interests of the people of the State—silent, unobtrusive work though it was, it proved to be of the most statesmanlike quality. In the analysis of the problems that seemed to him of pressing importance, as well as in the thorough study that his sense of duty impelled him to give to them, the innate purity of his character is always markedly in evidence. A study of his messages and other State papers will show that the vital questions he ever held in mind were those connected with the

welfare of the people, while those relating to his own political future were absolutely non-existent.

Among these there are three that stand out with greater relative prominence than the others; these relate to taxation and expenditure of public money, public education, and the national guard. With respect to the first, he made himself acquainted with the conditions that affected the people of the State as a whole, and then of those in the lesser communities where the taxes had become excessive and burdensome through faulty legislation. Commending to the Legislature the importance of a careful supervision of the expenditure of the State Government, he succeeded in lessening the State tax and finally in having it abolished. In the smaller communities of counties, townships, and cities he strongly urged the citizens, the working men as well as the men of property, to take an active interest in the affairs of their local government, and recommended the collection of such full information with regard to financial affairs that waste and improvidence might be detected and remedied. In all these measures he had constantly in view the welfare of the State as affected by the welfare of its constituent parts, clearly perceiving that reforms to be of lasting value must begin at the ultimate sources of political power.

With every question relating to public education he was in active sympathy, and as he had given a great deal of study to the subject he had acquired positive views, which he embodied in his recommendations to the Legislature. He was of the opinion that it was good political economy to cause the children to be educated along the lines that would ultimately benefit the commercial and other industries of the State, and to foster industrial and technical schools by such State aid in their first establishment as would be requisite to open those avenues that would ultimately lead to an increase in wealth and prosperity of the people in their several communities. Thus, in an agricultural region, the studies of the youth should be turned toward the fundamental principles of agri-

culture, to the end that the art might be pursued intelligently; while in cities, where manufactures and the mechanic arts flourish, the purpose should be to bring the educated mind to bear upon the work of their hands, the result in both cases being to give greater satisfaction and contentment to all workers in their life pursuits. He pointed out the necessity of technical schools to improve the art of glassmaking, a growing industry in the southern part of the State, the silk and cotton factories at Paterson, and the potteries at Trenton. Through his own individual efforts he accomplished a great deal with respect to the last industry, and the decided advance made in the character of the product of the Trenton potteries is in a great measure due to his intelligent and active interest in the subject.

"The maintenance of an efficient and well-organized national guard," says he in his message to the Legislature, session of 1880, "kept within just limits as to numbers, is not only in accordance with the spirit of our institutions, but it is rendered absolutely necessary by their very nature. Such a force weighs lightly upon the finances and resources of the individual States; keeps alive the military spirit, habits, and knowledge of the people; furnishes the best possible means of suppressing internal troubles; is capable of performing admirable service in preventing or resisting foreign aggression, and is one of the best and most indispensable guards of the permanence of our free institutions." In consonance with these views he devoted his best efforts to increase the efficiency of the force enrolled by the State by improving its discipline and marksmanship, and at the end of his term of office he could confidently assert that it was in so gratifying a condition that it could be relied upon to preserve the peace within the borders of the State without calling for assistance from the General Government. Ever since then the National Guard of New Jersey has enjoyed a very high reputation for efficiency, and no small portion of the credit is due to McClellan's intelli-

gent appreciation of what was necessary to be done and to his active efforts in its accomplishment.

McClellan's career as Governor exemplified in the highest degree that abnegation of self that was to be expected on the part of a man who regarded the obligation of his oath of office as paramount, his personal interests and political future a negligible factor, and the interests of the people of the State his most sacred charge. Viewed in this light it is impossible to conceive how any man could have accomplished more than he did during the three years of his governorship. His messages were admirable, full of the most practical suggestions, and were based upon an intelligent comprehension of the immediate necessities requiring legislative attention. His course as a lawmaker was commendable, for he signed and vetoed bills actuated by a high sense of duty, and not at the demands of party politics nor under the temptations of future personal political advancement. His conduct merited and received the approbation of the good people of both parties, and it was universally conceded that his administration was clean, pure, and beyond reproach. "No Executive of this State," says one of his associates in the government, "ever made or could have hoped to have made a purer or more exalted record as a public official than he left behind him. The people loved to do him honor, and he was always most worthy of their highest favor."

On the expiration of his term of office as Governor he declined a renomination, and never again accepted public office, except that of membership in the Board of Managers of the National Home for Disabled Soldiers, which he held until his death. The remainder of his life was passed most unobtrusively, thenceforth free from the glare of publicity, and in the full enjoyment of those responsive pleasures that surround the happy home of a cultured American citizen. Domesticity was a paramount affection in McClellan's heart, and nothing could have given him more unalloyed happiness than to supervise the construction of

the dwelling that he had planned in his own mind to be the ultimation of a home love, ever cherished in his heart. Here, on the Orange Mountain, with his devoted and charming wife and lovely children, a son and daughter, McClellan's home life was delightful beyond description. In addition to this he improved his opportunities, whenever possible, to travel with his family in foreign lands, which, owing to his acquaintance with modern languages, yielded him full returns in the intellectual pleasure he derived in the study of literature and art. Spending his summers usually at St. Moritz, in the beautiful Engadine Valley of Switzerland, he became an enthusiastic lover of mountain climbing, and very early initiated his little son in this healthful and fascinating pastime.

Apparently McClellan's physical constitution was so excellent that he could reasonably hope to reach an advanced age, but in the early autumn of 1885 the premonitory symptoms of heart failure caused him to seek medical advice. From this time on recurring attacks were frequent, and although they did not give him any apprehension of a fatal termination, they did induce him, under medical advice, to seek intervals of rest from confining literary work in the hope that his malady would disappear. But about midnight on October 28th an attack of unusual severity forced him to rise from his bed to seek relief in a sitting posture. Nothing that his skillful physician could do, at this stage of the disease, could stay its progress toward dissolution, and although suffering the greatest physical agony, he sought, with extreme self-sacrifice and by the exercise of the utmost self-control, to conceal from his devoted wife and daughter the extent of his suffering. At about three o'clock in the morning of the 29th of October, turning with a look of deepest affection to his beloved wife, McClellan, in the weakness of utter physical exhaustion, whispered to his physician, "Tell her I am better now," and with these loving words passed peacefully away.

At the residence of his personal friend, Mr. William

C. Prime, in the city of New York, the coffin that inclosed his remains was surrounded by those who came to pay their last sad offices and tribute to their friend and comrade. The funeral services at the Madison Square Presbyterian Church in New York city, and the interment of his remains in his private plot overlooking the beautiful Delaware in the cemetery at Trenton, N. J., fittingly closed the earthly life of George Brinton McClellan.

In attempting to formulate a satisfactory estimate of a man from the noteworthy events of his life we are confronted with a problem of the utmost complexity, for we are generally ignorant of the modifying influences of surrounding circumstances, the secret springs of action, and the determining conclusions of mental operations. If, however, it be granted that every one born into the world is endowed with an inherent character hereditarily derived, which education and training can never radically change nor dispossess, but merely modify and direct, we may arrive at an approximate estimate by a study of those ever-present characteristics that the experience and activities of the maturer life ultimately develop into marked prominence from the feebler indications of early life. From this point of view we may note with satisfaction McClellan's exemplary conduct, scholastic proficiency, devotion to duty, gentlemanly instincts, dignified and reposeful bearing, and tactful and charming manners. These qualities, manifested very early in his life, markedly affected his relations with every one with whom he came in contact, being full of charm to all, and giving unalloyed pleasure to the relatively few who enjoyed his intimate personal friendship. So exceptional a degree of early perfection has, however, its disadvantages, especially during the formative period of life, since it often forbids that healthful criticism of thought and conduct which so generally attends upon good fellowship, and from which he who stands in a measure apart from his fellows is often deprived.

His service throughout the Mexican War merits

the highest commendation; every duty assigned to him was thoroughly well done, and he never sought to depart from that strict subordination which his position as a subaltern exacted of him. While he was never rash nor foolhardy, his coolness in danger, personal courage, and intrepidity were conspicuous. The just expectations of his early promise and training were amply confirmed not only in this war, but in all of his subsequent service as a junior officer. He was so indefatigably industrious and conscientiously devoted to his work and duty that he was universally regarded as an admirable type of the educated American subaltern officer. Up to this point in his career the strata of results are then strictly conformable to the theory of expectation, and the problem of analysis of his character is an extremely simple one.

But in attempting to arrive at a just estimate of McClellan's military status as developed during the War of the Rebellion, when the safety of the capital and the responsibilities of a great army were intrusted to him, the problem is a much more difficult one. It must not be forgotten that he was advanced almost suddenly to a position of high rank and command, when through dire public necessity it became imperative to select a leader who had the prestige of military success; and although his campaign in West Virginia had not then been so thoroughly digested as to give him his just rating as a commander, his selection was perfectly legitimate and received universal approval. The Government of the United States has ever been so completely negligent in time of peace of the necessities of the profession of arms for the exigencies of war that the competency of its army commanders must ever be an unknown factor. It must select them somewhat haphazardly, and test them by the expensive method of experience until a good one is found. McClellan was thus tried for eighteen months, and then cast aside by the Administration as a failure.

Among the great commanders of the war he still occupies a unique position, for while their military

reputations are now fairly well established, his has been so much entangled with political considerations that it is still a subject of controversy. On the one hand, it is claimed that his military failures can be shown to be due to the interference of the Government after he had entered upon his campaigns in the full expectation and under the distinct promise that he would be provided with all the means that he had counted upon in preparing his plans to carry them to a successful issue; while, on the other, it is asserted that his plans involved such contradictory elements and were so ill digested that it was impossible for the Government to fulfill his requisitions, and that his failure must be ascribed to his own imperfections as a general. But a more impartial estimate must lie between these extreme partisan views, both of which had their origin at a time when the passionate influences of political turmoil and excitement powerfully affected the judgments of the virile men who then controlled the activities of the General Government.

In forming an estimate of his military character it is necessary to search for those characteristic traits that seem to dominate the salient events connected with his command of the Army of the Potomac especially. Among these none stand out with more prominence than his fondness for that theoretical branch of his profession relating to strategy. Even before he became general in chief, though anticipating his advancement to that position, he occupied his mind with the greater problems of a general movement of all the Union armies, sacrificing the more pressing necessity of an effective consideration of an advance of the army under his immediate command. In the science of generalship Napoleon was his exemplar, but, unfortunately, in none of the three campaigns undertaken by McClellan is there any exhibition of that ready adaptation of means to the end in view, followed by celerity of movement to gain strategical advantage, that were so characteristic of Napoleon's operations. The success of such combinations requires not only the possession of a highly

developed strategic sense, but also that comprehensive mental grasp and range by which every detail essential for success has been antecedently carefully studied out and adapted to the general plan in its just relation. It was in this latter essential that McClellan was constitutionally weak.

In the early days of the war, when the authorities at Washington were hoping that the war might be settled by the employment of modest numbers, McClellan's conception of the necessities of the case, as exhibited in his memorandum of August 4, 1861, and in his letters to the Secretary of War in the following October and February, were to them more than startling. The central idea in all of his strategical plans was a *decisive result* to be gained in one great battle, and this he conceived could best be accomplished by the employment of great armies. But in a new country and among an unmilitary people great armies consume time ravenously for their organization, equipment, instruction, and discipline; exasperating delays ensue even before the strategic march can be undertaken, and when at last the advance is ordered, the disproportionate impedimenta with new troops, the resulting encumbered roads, unexpected changes and conditions in the weather and topography, together with the thousand and one other difficulties constantly arising, combine to make the actual campaign entirely different from that which before seemed theoretically perfect. Very early in McClellan's career—indeed, only four days after he had been appointed to the command of the Ohio Volunteer Militia—this leaning to the creation of great armies is shown in the plan he submitted May 27, 1861, to General Scott, for a movement up the Great Kanawha toward Richmond with an army of eighty thousand men. It also furnishes an evidence of the strategical bent of McClellan's mind, since its presentation was entirely voluntary upon his part, as well as the fact that a "speedy termination of the war" was a controlling idea in his mind from the start.

In his successful West Virginia campaign the main

strategical elements of his problem were clearly outlined at Grafton before he began his march, but the active column under his own command did not move with that celerity that he had anticipated, and he felt obliged to make apology for the slowness of his advance and the delays that he experienced. The noticeable points in this campaign are his greatly preponderating strength compared with that of the enemy, the accidental discovery of an unsuspected obscure path by which Rosecrans, with less than two thousand men, turned the enemy's position at Rich Mountain and with insignificant loss ended the campaign, and finally the strategical blunder which permitted Garnett's main body to escape by way of Horse Shoe Run. In the tone and composition of McClellan's address to his army on the inception of the campaign, and in his congratulatory orders to the troops upon its successful termination, there is a strong Napoleonic impress which exhibits the intemperate but preponderating influence that this consummate master exercised upon McClellan's imaginative mind.

But it is with regard to his original Peninsular plan of campaign, its subsequent modification, and his lack of success in conducting it that his reputation as a strategist and a commander will ultimately and mainly rest. To assist our judgment in arriving at a conclusion upon these points, a brief recapitulation of the salient events connected with this campaign will not be out of place here. In the first place, there seems to be no doubt that McClellan first conceived this plan some time in November, 1861, after he had become general in chief, intending it as a part of a more general plan of operations embodying the simultaneous movements of all the western armies as well. In its general features the plan contemplated the transportation by water of the bulk of the Army of the Potomac to Urbana on the Rappahannock, from which point it was contemplated to move it against Richmond, with the expectation that the Confederates would be forced

to accept battle in a position of McClellan's selection, which, in case of a Union victory, would give such decisive results as would lead to a speedy termination of the war. As elements of success, he relied upon secrecy, celerity of movement, the destruction of the railroad bridges in rear of the enemy, and a rapid disembarkation, so that he would have the advantage of a two days' march nearer to Richmond over his opponent, General Johnston. On December 1st he had about one hundred and seventy thousand men present for duty, of which the greater number were in the close vicinity of Washington, and he estimated that the strength of the enemy was about one hundred and fifty thousand men. It has been before pointed out that if McClellan believed the enemy to be as strong as here stated his plan was utterly inadmissible, for it would have resulted in making a present of the national capital to the Confederate army while his own army was in transit to its new base.

The general features of this plan were first officially outlined by McClellan in a letter that he was forced to write February 3d to the Secretary of War, to secure, if possible, the revocation of the peremptory orders of the President directing all the Union armies to begin active operations against the insurgent forces on the 22d of February. Though strongly opposing this plan and preferring that of an overland campaign, the President finally, but very unwillingly, yielded his preference after a council of war composed of twelve generals of the army, by a vote of eight to four, gave McClellan's plan their approval. If Barnard's statement be correct, that the plan was voted for offhand, without deliberation or discussion in the council, then the approval by this council of war added nothing to strengthen its military value, for without discussion and deliberation the assumed data upon which it was based could not be subjected to the necessary scrutiny to determine whether they were real or hypothetical, and whether the conclusions were strategically sound. Conceding the truth of Barnard's statement, the re-

sponsibility for the Urbana plan of campaign was wholly McClellan's.

But within five days he strongly advocates the substitution of the Peninsular campaign for that by way of Urbana, and a council of war comprising the four corps commanders present with the army recommends the new plan contingent upon certain specified provisions being effected, and, if not, that the overland campaign be at once undertaken. What were the reasons that produced this sudden change in McClellan's mind? His statement, published more than twenty-six years afterward, has been shown to be entirely in error. Here he says that "the fears of the Administration and their inability to comprehend the merits of the scheme, or else the determination that I should not succeed in the approaching campaign, induced them to prohibit me from carrying out the Urbana movement. They gave me the choice between the direct overland route *via* Manassas and the route with Fort Monroe as a base." It is in the highest degree probable that the true reasons were these: First, he always had a preference for the movement up the Peninsula, because in his opinion the base of supply and all the facilities for operations on that line were superior, safer, and more reliable than by way of Urbana; second, he did not choose it at first because he was afraid of the Confederate navy, but when he heard the result of the naval conflict at Hampton Roads he decided at once to make the change, assuming that the Monitor would be more than a match for the Merrimac; he expected by this change to secure the full co-operation of the navy, the use and control of the James River, and thus hoped to force the evacuation of Norfolk. He recognized that the anticipated results at Urbana promised greater brilliancy and expedition, but there he could expect but little or no assistance from the navy for rapid embarkation; and the movement further involved large detachments from his force for the protection of his depots and for the escort to his supply trains. Without compulsion he made his choice freely, and in this choice the influence of his emotional faith

in the Monitor and of his overprudent cautiousness are characteristically combined.

The campaign lasted three months and resulted in failure. The main cause of this failure, as asserted by his supporters, was due to the withdrawal of Blenker's division of McDowell's corps from the Army of the Potomac, which prevented the essential flank operation of turning the enemy's left at Yorktown from being carried out as devised, the campaign having been planned for the employment of four full corps of the army. This interference of the Administration and consequent diminution of his force compelled McClellan to undertake a siege of Yorktown, which caused a month's delay, during which time his army became enfeebled by disease and the enemy were able to concentrate in his front a force of at least equal strength. This action was attributed to the unfriendly attitude of an arbitrary and irascible Secretary of War, who had heretofore treated McClellan with contumely and now designed to thwart his operations in every way lest the military success which he might achieve would be followed by more important political success. Passion and prejudice die out with time, and it is not now necessary to combat arguments founded upon them then, for the patriotic self-sacrifice of the great actors of the rebellion, whether civil or military, is now well known to have been free from the taint of personal interest. However probable the success which the assistance of McDowell's corps might have brought to the Army of the Potomac, and however important this success might have been in implanting in its commander an aggressive spirit at the beginning of an active campaign, are now fruitless questions, because, under the circumstances of the time, it was not possible for the Administration to ignore the absolute danger in which Washington would have been placed had not McDowell been retained as a covering force.

McClellan's grave error was unquestionably in his failure to confer freely and frankly with his official superiors, the Secretary of War and the President, be-

fore he left Washington to ascertain with definiteness the actual force which would be entirely satisfactory to them for the protection of Washington, for they were by law the final arbiters of this question. Besides, this matter of an adequate protection was a distinct provision insisted upon by the council of corps commanders, and was not to be left to McClellan's own determination. His action can only be accounted for in view of the fact that his own self-appreciation had been so unduly stimulated that he had come to believe that he was the sole critic of the military policy to be adopted, and that whenever he was opposed by the civil officials it was due to personal jealousy arising from his growing popularity among the army and the people. His anxiety to get his army away from Washington, and his failure to have a thorough understanding with the Administration with regard to the location and composition of the force to be left behind, were the real causes bringing about the retention of McDowell's corps and changing the general plan of campaign.

Having arrived at Fort Monroe he found that he could not obtain that assistance of the navy for which he had hoped, and within a few days he ascertained that his assumptions with regard to the climatic conditions, character of the roads, topography of the country, and the security of his flanks were altogether different from what he had assumed them to be in devising his plan of campaign. Owing to this startling state of affairs and the news he had just then received of McDowell's retention, he was obliged to recast his problem under most discouraging circumstances. Influenced by prudent considerations, and somewhat perhaps by a deep sense of personal grievance, he determined upon a siege, when a more aggressive commander would first have tried a spirited assault. The month's delay that ensued was not only of the greatest advantage to the enemy in permitting them to strengthen their defenses and to accumulate their forces at the point of attack, but weakened the Army

of the Potomac in morale, and by the fatalities of an unhealthy climate and the depressing conditions of inactivity. The unfortunate battle of Williamsburg, the selection of the White House base instead of one on the James, the isolation of Keyes's corps at Seven Pines, the unnecessary expedition to Hanover Court House, the month's straddle of the Chickahominy, were the barren tactical results of the ensuing campaign, whose early strategical advantages had not been utilized.

Considering, now, the next great qualification of a successful commander, the ability to employ to the best advantage his forces on the battlefield, we may search in vain for a single illustrative example that would indicate the possession by McClellan of decided tactical ability. In none of the battles fought during his campaigns was he inferior in strength to the enemy on the field of battle, and yet in every instance the enemy at the point of attack was more formidable than he. In front of Washington, at Yorktown, on the Chickahominy, at the gaps of the South Mountain, and notably at Antietam, proper tactical combinations would have enabled him to bring a superior force upon any disputed point that would have given him the greater chances of victory. In planning his strategical combinations he foresaw the certainty of battle, which, though he hoped to make decisive, he also expected would be upon a battlefield of his own choice, where the enemy would be forced to make the attack. Other defects, such as his constant tendency to overestimate the strength of the enemy, timidity on the eve of battle, and lack of aggressiveness—characteristics of the safe and prudent general—added their influence to his tactical deficiency in making this campaign so disappointing in its results.

He acquired very early the reputation of a non-aggressive general from his determination not to risk a second Bull Run disaster with an undisciplined army, and therefore not to advance until everything was ready. But apart from the delays incident to thor-

ough preparation, his timidity and extreme prudence as a commander are markedly in evidence. Preferring the safer advantages of the defensive, he never sought the initiative of attack; thus he did not venture, except in one instance, to inform himself with certainty by strong reconnoissances of the enemy's strength and position in front of Washington, but rather hoped that Johnston would attack his intrenched lines; at Rich Mountain he weakened in his determination to attack when he heard the sound of Rosecrans's guns, and withdrew to his camp to await the morning; he lacked aggressiveness at Yorktown in the early days of April, and later, on the 16th, at Garrow's, he might have forced the line of the Warwick with Smith's division had he possessed more boldness and less prudence. His apprehension of failure on the eve of battle is exhibited in his dispatches just before Rich Mountain, and especially at the beginning of the Seven Days' fight, and this characteristic was undoubtedly stimulated by his constant tendency to overestimate greatly the strength of the enemy in his front.

But while his service of information was wretchedly inefficient, the surprising thing is that a commander possessing the logical and analytic mind of McClellan should not have clearly seen how utterly impossible it was for the Confederate Government to arm and equip armies of the magnitude he assumed it to have, when the United States Government, with all its bountiful sources of supply, could do no more. This unaccountable weakness in McClellan's mental equipment is always so conspicuously in evidence that its influence in the formation of his plans of campaign or in his dispositions for battle can never be ignored. Reacting against the dictates of sound reason, the emotional and imaginative side of his nature unduly affected his judgments with vacillating indecision, accentuated his constitutional timidity as a commander, weakened his determination by strengthening his prudence, and eventually robbed him of the fruits of victory at the supreme moment. Continually applying

for re-enforcements and promising that he would follow their arrival with positive performance, his failure to make good his promise served to make more manifest his incapacity to handle with success the great army committed to his charge. As notable instances, and specially illustrative of this particular trait, compare the promises made with regard to Franklin's division at Yorktown and McCall's division on the Chickahominy with the delay and change of purpose after their arrival.

These more prominent military deficiencies were undoubtedly the principal causes of McClellan's failure as a commanding general; they were inherent in his nature, for they exhibited themselves in every position where great responsibilities rested upon him. Opposing commanders quickly detected their existence and took them into consideration in formulating their plans of campaigns when operating against him, as is markedly illustrated by Lee's bold opening of the Seven Days' battles and the extra-hazardous chances he assumed in so widely separating the component parts of his army in the beginning of the Maryland campaign.

Surrounded by a devoted personal and administrative staff, General McClellan's military family formed a coterie that was sufficient unto itself, and because he seldom consulted his corps commanders the commander-in-chief idea developed into considerable prominence. Unsolicited advice was seldom proffered, and the avenues leading to unofficial personal contact with subordinate commanders were so much restricted that in some degree at least McClellan deprived himself of the means of acquiring that accurate knowledge of the *esprit* of the army which was oftentimes of the greatest importance. Possibly for this reason also he trusted to his subordinate commanders the conduct of vitally important battles, relying upon the information brought to him by his staff officers, where in several instances he was so far removed from the field of battle that it would have been impossible in

case of disaster to assume timely direction and control. Never in any battle, with the possible exception of Antietam, did he feel it incumbent upon himself to make use of his undoubted personal magnetism to inspire his troops on the fighting line with increased valor and devotion; and in this respect his conduct is in marked contrast with that of his able antagonist, General Lee, whose heroic presence and personal exposure at the critical period of a battle were repeatedly more strengthening to his almost yielding line than fresh re-enforcements.

It is certainly within the limits of probability that many of these military defects might have been eliminated had McClellan had the good fortune to enjoy the disciplinary advantages of service in a subordinate capacity before being advanced to the higher command of an army. As it was, however, the influences that grew out of the political conditions that existed at the beginning of the war, and their modifications as it progressed, affected his military reputation unduly because of his sudden advancement to a position of the highest prominence. The troublesome question of slavery would not cease its harassing importunities, and in process of time, since no great military success had been scored by the Union arms, the plea of military necessity was urged upon the Administration by the radical elements of the Republican party to bring about the advocacy of the restoration of the Union without slavery instead of its restoration as it was. Although this change of policy was not immediate, its drift was clearly perceived, and almost from the very first its supporters and opponents began to array themselves against each other in political hostility. Washington became the center of the conflict, and McClellan's attitude was soon well understood to be in accord with that of the War Democrats, to restore the Union as it was with all the constitutional guarantees sacredly unimpaired. Availing themselves of McClellan's high position to further their own political aims, the malcontents of every shade of opinion, peace advocates,

Confederate sympathizers, strict constructionists of the Constitution, indeed every one who had any grievance against the Government, made use of McClellan's conservatism to laud his patriotism and to defame the Administration. Owing to this intrusion of matters political into matters military this excessive laudation was met with equally intemperate passionate denunciation, and his inaction was vigorously assailed and disparaged not only in the public press but in the halls of Congress. But during his period of exaltation his own self-appreciation had become so unduly stimulated that he had come to believe that he was the destined savior of his country, and he was restive under any criticism of his military plans and purposes. Misconceiving the solidity of his convictions to be indisputable certainties, he misjudged the limitations of the patience of the people, the practical common sense of the President, and even before he had entered upon his campaign had antagonized his former strong friend and supporter, Secretary Chase, and in succession lost the support of nearly every member of the Cabinet; and finally, in consequence of his inability to divorce his political convictions from his professional obligations, and of his incapacity to perceive the inevitable trend of the public mind foreshadowing constitutional changes, he became unconsciously the puppet of a heterogeneous party opposing the Administration, and thus cut out from under his feet at a most inopportune time that firm political support which was then so essential for a continuance in active military command, and found it replaced by that non-cohesive quicksand of antagonism and distrust that simply engulfed him at the last.

But whatever may be the judgment that history will ultimately formulate with regard to McClellan's qualifications in the domain of strategy and tactics, there will be no divided opinion with respect to his talents and attainments for the organization of armies, and the wonderful power that he possessed of implanting in the hearts of his soldiers a personal affection and devotion that has never been excelled. The almost

universal demoralization affecting nearly all the civil and military leaders immediately after the disaster of Bull Run was speedily quenched when it was known that the successful general who had made so brilliant a campaign in West Virginia had been ordered to Washington to take command of the troops. In view of the trying days that were to come, the redoubtable antagonist that must needs be overcome to insure the salvation of the Union, and the desperate situation which anxiety and apprehension had brought about, it does seem to be a most fortunate combination of circumstances that resulted in McClellan's assignment at this particular juncture. For otherwise it is very doubtful whether his undoubted capacity for organization would have been permitted to have the full swing that it did have in the creation of the historic Army of the Potomac. There is, of course, a question whether a sufficiently reliable army might not have been evolved by the discipline of actual conflict against its equally untried opponent, as was in some degree the case with the armies of the West. But, in the light of subsequent events, we now see that the issue at stake was too vital, the consequences of thorough defeat of the protecting army so momentous, and the results of its final success so grand and glorious for our beloved country, that no one can regret McClellan's patient and thorough labor, nor forget the obligations that the country owes to him in this respect. He brought to his task an inherent love of order, system, and discipline, which his training at West Point had fostered and his subsequent studies and experience had developed into strong characteristics. His service with the Military Commission in Europe enabled him to become acquainted with the organization of foreign armies, and this knowledge he thoroughly digested and mastered in all its details. At the time of his appointment no one more clearly understood the proper harmonious relations that should exist between the several arms of the service in the organization of an efficient fighting force than he; and his systematic

efforts to develop the artillery, which had heretofore been much neglected, and to place it in its true relation with the infantry, affords but one example of his capacity as an organizer.

It is generally conceded that the particular individuality that characterized the Army of the Potomac throughout its whole career was due, in the greatest measure, to the impress that McClellan was enabled to give it during its formative period, and that its subsequent splendid efficiency was the legitimate fruit of the labor he had devoted to its organization, drill, and discipline. Never demoralized by defeat nor overelated by victory, this magnificent army formed the principal bulwark of defense to insure the safety of the nation's capital against the efforts of its formidable rival, the splendidly aggressive Army of Northern Virginia. So vital was its trust and so essential its safety from utter demoralization or destruction, that for three years it was, with the exception of the Peninsular campaign, forced to play the rôle of the defensive-offensive. But finally assuming the aggressive, it held with tenacity to its purpose of compelling the surrender of its formidable antagonist, which was accomplished at Appomattox. Then, its work being done, its constituent elements, those magnificent citizen soldiers who had become through the discipline of war the most famous of veterans, were absorbed in the body politic, ever after to remain the most peaceful citizens of the republic and the strongest conservers of freedom, law, and order. This result, so astounding to the nations of Europe, reflects the highest credit upon the civil and military leaders of the War of the Rebellion, and is indicative of the sterling fact that they were ever actuated by the purest patriotism, the highest personal honor, and the noblest self-sacrifice.

In republican America there is an order of nobility whose titles are God-given, and among these there are none that stand higher than does George B. McClellan in the thoroughness of his manhood and the purity of his personal character. In his walk and con-

versation he was ever the pure, clean-minded, Christian gentleman; a true patriot, who gave the best and all that was in him unselfishly to his country, willingly, freely, and unstintingly; a man of sweet and gracious mien and of tender and loving disposition. Unconsciously he drew all hearts in responsive affection to his wonderful personality, and there was never a commander so universally beloved by his troops; and when, as he rode the lines of his army at Warrenton in loving farewell to his veterans, he saw the unbidden tears spring to the eyes that had never quailed in battle, he must have felt how much greater than rank and command is the generous and spontaneous comrade-love which, though born amid scenes of danger and death, can never die.

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